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BLOSSOMS
1850

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CHRISTMAS BLOSSOMS,

AND

New Year's Wreath,

FOR

MDCCCL.

BY UNCLE THOMAS.

PHILADELPHIA:
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1850.

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C. SHERMAN, PRINTER.

Advertisement.

Our young readers have become so well acquainted with Uncle Thomas, from his visits in former years, that they cannot fail to welcome him at this, his fourth coming. He and his amiable sister, Aunt Wilson, seem to be unusually well supplied this season with entertaining stories and beautiful pictures, and our young friends, we feel assured, will grant that our Christmas Blossoms for 1850, have been too well guarded to display the slightest touch of the withering hand of frost.

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CHRISTMAS BLOSSOMS.

PREPARING FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

UNCLE THOMAS'S LETTER.

Our little readers will remember, no doubt, the many strange stories about dogs and horses, and birds and fishes, and a thousand other things, which Uncle Thomas and his sister, Miss Wilson, told them at the Christmas holidays last year and the year before. They remember, too, how many of these stories were first told to Emily Thompson and Stella Wilson, before they were printed in the Christmas Blossoms. Well; the Christmas holidays were coming round again very rapidly; but a great many changes take place in the course of a year.

Uncle Thomas had gone all the way to California, where people are now hurrying in such crowds, to dig for gold, and hunt for diamonds and rubies and pearls: not that Uncle Thomas wanted gold, for he was not very fond of money, and had as much of it already as he wished; but you know from his conversation in former years, that he was what they call a Geologist; and so he went to see how the rocks in that country were arranged,—how the country was formed when it was first lifted up out of the sea,—and whether there was any iron there to make mill-wheels, and coal to melt it with;—for Uncle Thomas was a queer fellow, and thought that iron was worth a great deal more than gold.

Miss Wilson, his sister, had gone to France and Italy and Switzerland, leaving Stella behind her, under the care of Mrs. Thompson; and many a fine romp did she enjoy with Emily in the intervals of school, for they were just about of one age.

But Stella and Emily were both a year older than they were when we last heard from them; and they began to be less fond of romping, and more fond of reading and hearing about other countries and things

that had been all Greek to them a year or two before. Indeed, they were so foolish, that often when they were listening with the greatest interest to the conversation of the friends of Mr. Thompson, most of whom were very scientific, they were afraid to ask the meaning of the long words they heard used by their elders, for fear they should be thought ignorant, forgetting that this is the very way for little boys and girls to remain really ignorant.

I do not mean to approve of children being too forward in worrying their seniors with questions about everything they hear, especially when they ought to know beforehand that many subjects are altogether beyond the understanding of the very young. One of the worst habits that a child can form, is that of asking the same question over and over again, and, perhaps, repeating it a second time before the answer is completed. I have often remarked that children who have this fault, never remember anything that they are told, and scarcely ever come to be thought much of, or to be of much use in the world when they grow up to be men and women. This is perhaps the reason why so many old people teach the

doctrine that "children were made to be seen, and not heard;" but if we were to practise upon this rule too far, we should never be anything else but children, if we lived to be grandfathers and grandmothers. Children should see everything, and hear everything, and whenever they see or hear anything that they cannot understand, they should watch for a suitable time, and ask some suitable person to explain it to them: and when once they really understand the explanation, they will find that they cannot forget it, even if they wish to do so.

As I have said, Emily and Stella were a little too proud or too diffident,—for it is often very difficult to distinguish between pride and diffidence,—to inquire the meaning of words even when it was proper to do so; and they were apt to trust to looking for them in the dictionary, which often left them just as wise as before, because the definitions were too short, or contained words as difficult as those they were intended to explain.

Now, I dare say that some of you, my little readers, are just as diffident—I hope not proud,—as Stella and Emily, and that you would like very much to know

more clearly what kind of a thing a Geologist is; but I must leave that to be explained by one who is quite as happy as I could be in his way of talking to little folks, and who loves them just as much as I do, which is saying a great deal.

"Oh, mother!" cried Emily to Mrs. Thompson, as she and Stella came tripping home from school, tossed down their muffs on the pier-table, and began to unhook their cloaks; "next Tuesday-week is Christmas! Only think! I wonder whether our teacher will give another party this year, as she did last."

"Next Tuesday-week *will be* Christmas,—so I'll go head, if you please," said Stella, laughing.

"Mrs. Jones informs me that she intends visiting her sick sister at New York, during the holidays, and I fear that you will be disappointed in the party for this season," remarked the mother,—and Stella exclaimed—"Oh, my! how dull it will be. If my dear Aunt Wilson were only at home! How queer it feels to call her *aunt*, when I have been always used to call her mother! I do wish they would let one have two mothers."

You will remember that Stella had been adopted

and brought up by Miss Wilson; but now that she was getting to be bigger, she was told that she must no longer call herself Stella Wilson, but Stella Roberts, after her real mother, who died when she was only six months old. They say that Miss Wilson shed a great many tears when she summoned courage to tell the sweet little girl that she must no longer bear her name,—it was just before that lady went to France,—and they say, too, that Stella shed twice as many tears as Miss Wilson. No wonder, then, that she did not like to call her aunt; it sounded too cold and distant.

"Mother; where do you think Uncle Thomas is now?" inquired Emily. "If he were here, we could give a party by ourselves, and wouldn't we be happy! We would invite five or six of the scholars; and Stella and I would sit and listen to his stories about the Indians, and the gold-diggers, and the sea, and everything he has seen, while the girls might dance and sing, and play, and amuse themselves as they pleased. Oh, but we should be happy!"

"That would be rather an uncivil way of playing the hostess," said Mrs. Thompson: "Your duty

would be to devote yourself to the entertainment of your guests; and it is thought very impolite for the lady of the evening to give her attention exclusively to any one of the company for many minutes at a time; because it is considered as a slight to others. For this reason, it is a great deal pleasanter to go to a party, than to give one. Besides, my dear, you could not invite a few of your schoolmates, to the neglect of others, on such an occasion, without making enemies who would render your situation uncomfortable during your future studies; and some of them might perhaps continue hostile through life. If you have chosen your friends wisely, you would find that those whom you would not wish to invite, are precisely those who would be most resentful of your preferences. So I would advise you never to give general parties until you are old enough to enter society: then indeed, you can not help doing so, though you may find it more of a task than a pleasure. However; the little bird in the air, that you have heard so much about, whispers me that our Christmas will not pass over without some merry company to enliven us. What would you give now, to hear the contents of this very long letter?"

—and she drew from her work-basket, an embossed envelope, which she held up before them.

"A letter!—Long letters are just what I like!—Who is it from?" cried both the girls in a breath.

"From Uncle Thomas himself," replied Mrs. Thompson, smiling.

"Oh! dear Uncle Thomas! Where is he? Is he coming home? How much gold has he got? Does he say anything about us? When will he be here? Do read it! Oh, I am so delighted!" Such were the exclamations of the excited children, as they danced and clapped their hands for very joy: and as soon as the mother could pacify them sufficiently to listen, she read the letter as follows.

"Dear Madam:—

"Once more I tread my native soil; for, some time must elapse before I can learn to regard the shores of the Pacific as really a portion of the country of my birth. Your husband may have already informed you, of my arrival at this city, as I yesterday forwarded him several curious minerals, which the convenience of his laboratory will enable him to analyze. Give

me joy, my friends, for I have not only escaped from the land of gold, gems, pearls, rattlesnakes, and grizzly bears, but find myself unexpectedly about to be reunited to all that can endear the social life of a confirmed old bachelor, who has been flirting so long with the Sciences, that he has now no right to expect ever to settle in life.

"My first inquiry on reaching New York, related to your partner, yourself, and Emily, together with my sister's protegée, dear little Stella. I trembled as I awaited the response, for Death is sadly prone to select the worthiest victims; and hearing of your continued health and prosperity, I concluded, that for the present, my happiness was as complete as possible. In this, however, I was agreeably deceived; for, on calling upon my banker, I found a letter from my sister awaiting my return, and, on opening it, was delighted to find that like myself she is tired of wandering, and expects to arrive at Boston in the next steamer from Liverpool, which will be due in three or four days. Thither I shall proceed to meet her, and you may expect us both in Philadelphia, to

join with you and the dear children in the festivities of the approaching Christmas."

"So Aunt will be here at last; how delightful!" interrupted Stella.

"Hush, my dear, and listen," said Mrs. T.

"Tell the young folks that Uncle Thomas has not forgotten them while wandering among the bright-plumaged paroquets, the chattering monkeys, the monstrous snakes, and the ruined cities, all overgrown with tall tropical trees and tangled *cacti* (plants like the prickly pear), of the Mexican peninsula, nor when lost among the snow-capped mountains, or trudging ankle-deep in the volcanic dust of the broad desert, or among the root-digging savages about the great Salt Lake of Upper California; and I bring home with me lots of stories and pictures, enough to keep us talking for a year and more, if I could spend so long a time with them.

"But I have some things with me that will give them a great deal more pleasure, I am sure, than anything I tell them about—some things that they can see, and play with, and talk to—a couple of the

sweetest little pets that ever were seen, all alive and full of sport: and they shall be my Christmas present!

"In passing through one of the principal streets of St. Louis, my attention was struck by the countenance of a lady who was approaching, and whose face seemed peculiarly familiar. The impression was mutual; and, as we met, both paused for an instant in some embarrassment. 'Julia Green!' I exclaimed as I recognised an old friend whom I had not seen for more than ten years. 'Julia Somers at present, Mr. Wilson,' replied the lady, with a blush. You need not tell the little folks, my dear madam, how strangely I felt at this information, though time had altered us both since last we met.

"And so Julia was married! We parted long years ago, in a little grove behind her father's grounds on the banks of the Connecticut, between the moonlight shadows of Mount Tom and Mount Holyoke:—We parted very kindly, but I will not say on my part, very happily; for, had it not been that I was her senior by twenty years, I am not quite sure that her name had not now been Somers.

"Well; of course I attended her home, and was

introduced to her husband. And after a long talk about former times, Mrs. Somers observed: 'If we might venture to ask a favour of you, on the strength of old recollections, my dear Mr. Wilson, we shall consider our accidental meeting doubly fortunate.'

"I expressed my sincere desire to serve her in anything within the range of my ability, and she proceeded:—'We have two children, sir; and, like most parents, we think there are none in the world quite like them.'—And she pointed, with all a mother's pride, to a painting of two perfect little angels that hung above the mantel.—'You perceive,' she continued, 'that others beside ourselves consider these darlings not unworthy of notice; for the "poet-artist" has not only exceeded himself in painting them, but has addressed to them some of his prettiest verses; and I shall be very happy to show them to you, if you remain in St. Louis a few days.' 'Pshaw, my dear; how foolishly vain you are! I dare say Mr. Wilson thinks they are very common-place children;' said her husband, with a sly glance that seemed to say, 'but I don't believe a word of this.'

"You know, my dear Mrs. Thompson, that I never

flatter; so I *said* nothing; but I must have *looked* something; for, both parents appeared very much pleased, and Mrs. Somers blushed as she added: 'My husband came to the West, uncertain as to his residence, and our little darlings have been left in New York, under the care of an aunt, until this matter is determined. And now, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Somers has concluded to invest his capital in a mining operation, in the territory of Minesota, and his interest requires that he should reside upon the spot. Ah! sir, you little know what a dreadful trial it is to part with Mary and Emma for such a length of time; and yet it is impossible to subject these delicate little creatures to all the exposures and difficulties of a new settlement, until our grounds are cleared and our homestead completed and arranged, which will be a work of years. To make our difficulties greater, we have just received a letter from their aunt, stating that she is ordered by her physician, to the south of France, for the recovery of her health; and we have resolved to place our children at school in Philadelphia, until we can prepare a home for them; if indeed, there is any such place as home in this feverish country, where

everybody seems to be in continual motion. Now, my dear Mr. Wilson,' said she, with a sigh, 'may I beg you to undertake the selection of a suitable school for them? We have full confidence in your judgment; and it will save Mr. Somers a long journey at the most inclement season of the year, leaving me an unprotected stranger in a strange land. And oh, if I dare ask a still greater boon! But no; it is too presumptuous!'

"'Ask anything in my power, Julia; my friendships are not many, and I trust they are neither as light nor as transient as a summer cloud,' I replied; and Mrs. Somers, with a look of gratitude, inquired;—'Might I then beg you to intercede with your inestimable sister, to extend over my almost orphan little ones, a portion of that motherly care which, in the absence of more immediate claims upon her affections, I have been informed she has already extended to one even more unfortunately situated.'"

Here Stella hid her face in Mrs. Thompson's lap and burst into tears. Mrs. T. wound her fingers affectionately into the child's long wavy curls, and went on with the letter.

"Need I assure you, madam, that I instantly pledged my word for the pleasure with which my sister would undertake this delightful task? But I went further, and told her that as Miss Wilson might probably remain in Europe for several months, I would venture to pledge the similar kindness of an equally unexceptionable protectress until her return. Have I ventured too far in my dependence upon your friendship and benevolent feeling?

"Well; here I am then—a scientific bachelor, in charge of two sweet little girls, of six and eight years respectively. I have selected the school of our mutual friend Mrs. Jones, in order that these interesting children may become playmates and associates of our own dear Stella."

"And why didn't he say mine too?" interrupted Emily, with a pout.

"Do not be impatient, my love, you will hear more presently," replied her mother as she proceeded with the letter.

"Mrs. Jones writes me word that the illness of her sister will make it inconvenient to enlarge her family till after the holidays; and if you will consent to give

shelter to these motherless ones until the school re-opens, or until Miss Wilson is re-established in her own house, I promise her best endeavours and my own, to make the Christmas week pass merrily with them and you, as well as Emily and Stella."

"Oh dear mother!"—"Oh Mrs. Thompson!"—exclaimed both girls in a breath, "I hope you will consent!"

"Certainly, my children! But have a little patience, or we shall never reach the end of this long letter."

"Why; isn't it done yet?" asked Stella in surprise. "Not quite, my dear," and Mrs. Thompson renewed the reading.

"Before I left St. Louis, I begged leave to take a pencil sketch of the picture of the two little girls, as I intend to have them engraved for the frontispiece of next number of the Christmas Blossoms; so I send the drawing by the hands of the bearer of this letter, in order that, before you make up your mind whether to grant my request or not, you may know something of the appearance of those that I am so desirous of placing in your little garden of flowers, until they can be more permanently planted out: and, as a kind of intro-

ductory letter, I have enclosed a copy of the very pretty verses in which the poet-artist has celebrated their charms."

"There, my children, now you have heard it all."

"And the picture! Let us look at the picture?"

The picture was displayed, as you see it in the frontispiece; and again the girls danced and clapped their hands.

"Oh! did you ever see anything so beautiful?" "Why the dear little angels!" "Mother, I shall love them so much!" "I shall kiss and hug them to death!" were their ejaculations, in rapid succession.

"Here, Dash! Why where is Dash?" cried Emily, who never esteemed a pleasure complete, until she had shared it with her favourite setter.

"In the yard, my dear," said her mother. and Stella immediately ran out to call the dog.

Dash entered the parlour with commendable gravity, for he too had advanced considerably in age since the last New-Year. But, being a puppy of taste, as well as intelligence, he was still excitable upon the subject of the fine arts. He had broken two valuable mirrors when shown his face in them; being probably wrought

into fury, because their reflections softened down too much of the strong points of his peculiarly dogged character, and he barked most fiercely at his master's portrait when it was first brought home; perhaps because he loved Mr. Thompson as he was, much better than as the flattery of the pencil represented him.

"Come, Dash, look at these pretty little girls! They are coming to play with you at Christmas; and won't you love them, Dash? Aren't they little beauties?"

Dash turned his connoisseur nose to the drawing, that being the most delicate of his organs, and looking up in Emily's face, uttered his habitual sentence of approval—"Wough!" So, as the whole family were favourably disposed on the occasion, there appeared every prospect of a merry Christmas for the little Misses Somers, notwithstanding the absence of their parents in the far West.

The two girls then asked to hear the poetry that had been written in celebration of their future playmates; and Mrs. Thompson, excusing herself from reading any more at the moment, she being somewhat fatigued with the long letter of Uncle Thomas, they

drew their chairs to the centre-table, and leaning, each on the other's shoulder, spelled out from a very bad hand, the following beautiful lines.

THE LITTLE SISTERS.

BY THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

Fair Ramblers in the golden realm
  Where Childhood's star prevails,
Like Morning, sandaled with the dew,
  Ye walk those sacred vales :—

And through enchanted fields, where lie
  The sun's celestial beams,
Adown the amber air ye chase
  The laughter-winged dreams.

Those dreams, whose wings are soiled and crushed
  In life's maturer hours,
Are caught and held within your palms,
  As they were wrapped in flowers !

Dear pilgrims in the holy land,
  The Orient of your years,
The angels have filled up your scrip
  With beauty, mirth, and tears :—

With tears that are not born of grief,
But swim within the eyes
Like stars amid the wavering shades
Of morn-illumined skies.

And they have mantled you in robes
Of loveliness and light,
And placed the lily on your breasts
Which sun nor shade shall blight,

And crowned your brows with nameless flowers,
And buds that Time shall ope,
And given into your little hands
The vernal staff of Hope:

So purely have they filled your scrip,—
So lovingly have given,—
That ye are pilgrim memories
Of what they saw in Heaven!

Just as the children had finished reading the verses, Mr. Thompson came in, and Biddy, the maid, appeared to call the family to tea. Dash stretched himself out at full length, gave a long yawn, that proved he had much less taste for poetry than for

painting, and rising with great deliberation from his *siesta* on the hearth-rug, marched side by side with Stella, to the dining-room door. Having thus performed his duty as a puppy of polish, and, with the exception of his master, the only male in the family. presentable in the drawing-room, he retired with dignity to his own apartment, in the carriage-house.

Leaving the young folks to their studies, and the bustle of preparation for their coming guests, in the intervals of school, we will now take leave of this interesting circle until the holidays.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE INTRODUCTION.

Oh, the cakes and candies! Oh, the lemonade and ice-cream! The *piano* laboured like an *anvil*, until, if it had been human, it would have perspired in spite of the snow-storm out of doors, with its exertions to make itself heard, above the shouts and merry laughter of some twenty little boys and girls. The windows rattled and the very walls were shaken, by the bounding and leaping,—the racing and tumbling—of the half-dancing and half-romping youngsters. Such a time had never before been seen in the parlours of Mrs. Thompson. The centre and pier-tables had been removed, and the mantel ornaments carefully closeted, to give room for the frolic of Christmas Eve, and most fully did the children avail themselves of the license of the season. All the little Thompsons, and all their relatives by blood or mar-

riage, even to the third degree of cousinship, who had not reached their "*teens*," were there, and it is little wonder, that scarce a chair or a table was to be found in its proper place and posture half an hour after the revel begun.

The jollity was at its height as the clock struck eight, and the handkerchief covered Stella's eyes as she groped about the back-room, in the game of blind-man's buff.

Tingle dingle, ding, tingle ding, ding, ding, went the door-bell.

Old Dash, out in the yard, seemed to know that something very unusual was about to happen, for he put up his snout towards the stars, and his upper lip trembled, and his nose looked pinched and wrinkled, as he snuffed the air three times; and then, his long, loud howl rang through the apartments, drowning laugh, shout, and piano, and bringing all the children into an awe-struck silence.

"What *can* be the matter with Dash!" exclaimed Emily, as they stood gazing at each other, almost in terror.

Slowly the back-parlour door opened, and a middle-

aged man made his appearance, with a portfolio under one arm, and with a middle-aged woman leaning on the other.

"Uncle Thomas!" cried Emily, as she sprang to meet him.

Away went the handkerchief from Stella's brow, into the middle of the room, and at the next instant, giving a leap that would have done honour to Taglioni bounding to the foot-lights, she was hanging with her arms round the neck of Miss Wilson.

"But where are the dear little girls—the little Misses Somers?" exclaimed Emily, as Aunt Wilson unwound Stella's arms, and, with a kiss and a smile, replaced her on the floor.

"What is tugging so at my dress? Is it Dash?" asked the lady, as she gave a twitch to her gown, on either hand. And lo, and behold!—*there*, on her left was seen a pretty little face, the chin pointing to the floor, the eyes trying to turn up to the ceiling, and the forefinger in the mouth, as if it were a piece of white mintstick;—while on the other side, peeped forth a head of wavy hair, with a pair of bright eyes

and cherry cheeks under it, all glowing with blushes and half-tearful smiles.

"Oh! what a little darling!" cried Emily, as she rushed to salute the latter.

"Oh, the little angel!" exclaimed Stella, as she darted upon the former, and covered her with kisses.

But the strong light, the crowd of unknown faces, and the warmth of this boisterous introduction, were too much for the little strangers. The elder trembled, and her lip pouted; but the younger fairly burst into tears.

Then there was such a time of soothing and apology, as never before was seen. The music in the front room ceased, and all the little company gathered around the new-comers, to sympathize with them, and make them feel at home; but alas! it only made matters worse with Emma, the younger child; for she cried until her sweet little eyes were red and dim, and Mr. Thompson, at last, rung the bell and directed Biddy to bring in a basin and towel, to wash away her tears.

Now it happened, that when Biddy went out to fill the basin with water, fresh and cool from the hydrant,

she left the kitchen door open for a moment, and somebody else slipped in while her back was turned.

Well, the washing was almost done, and the poor child was beginning to be pacified, and getting used to the bustle around her, when a strange scratching was heard at the door, and a low whine, as if somebody was there in distress. The old folks were too busy with Emma and her sister to notice the interruption; but Charley Roberts, a cousin of Stella, and one of the oldest boys at the family party, went to the door and opened it, to see what was the matter.

The moment the latch was turned, in sprang a great black dog, and away he went, round and round the room, sometimes over the heads of the little folks, and sometimes between their feet. In less than half a minute, four or five of the children lay sprawling on the carpet, while Biddy hastily retreated with the basin, for fear of having it overturned, and the great dog leaped up and uttered a loud bark close to the face of Uncle Thomas, clapping his paws upon his shoulder.

"Down, Dash! down, I say!" cried Mr. Thompson. But the dog acted as if he were crazy. Spreading

his fore paws wide on the carpet, at the feet of Miss Wilson, and bringing his broad muzzle flat down between them, he said his "how-d'ye-do" in a short, quick "*wough!*" and then, renewing his circles round the room, in another half minute the gallant beast, amid laughter and screams, had kissed with his rough tongue, half the girls in the room,—but not one of the boys!—not he! Dash was a puppy of too good taste for that!

"I am fearful," remarked Uncle Thomas, with a smile, "that our welcome is almost too dogmatically warm for our young western guests, who, probably, have never been at so large a party before. Had we not better retire with them to some other apartment, until they begin to feel more at their ease?"

"The children have a thousand questions to ask you in relation to your travels, and the library room is entirely at your service," said Mr. Thompson.

"Well, then, my young friends, will you excuse us if we claim the attention of Emma and Stella for an hour in the library? Can you spare them to us, and still go on with your amusements?" inquired Miss Wilson.

Half a dozen voices answered, "Oh, yes,—we will try to do without them!"

"If they don't carry off all the cakes and the ice-cream," added fat little Master Edwards.

"Ha! ha! come then, I'll be buff,—so go ahead!" cried Cousin Charley: and the piano began to *thump* again, and the children to jump again, and the romp was as lively as ever by the time the old folks, with Mary and Emma Somers, Emily Thompson, and Stella Roberts, under the guidance of Dash as pioneer, reached the library door. What was said and done there, before the company separated, must be told in another place.

THE LIBRARY,

OR, A TRIP TO CHAGRES.

Dash was dismissed at the library door; for, although he was a very discreet dog on most occasions, it cannot be supposed that he could be admitted into an apartment held sacred to Mr. Thompson's studies, filled as it was, with costly books, maps, plates, and pictures, and rare and delicate curiosities. Even Biddy was never allowed to "dust" *there*, Mrs. Thompson herself superintended the taking up of the carpet and the scrubbing of the floor at house-keeping time, and it was observed that her husband, usually so quiet and good-natured, was always exceedingly nervous and prone to scold everybody and everything during that operation. It was a great compliment to Miss Wilson that even she was occasionally invited to enter; and the presence

of four children within that room was a matter of astonishment. Yet there they were,—Miss Wilson in the great study arm-chair, with little Emma on her lap, and Stella at her feet, sitting on a great folio copy of Johnson's Dictionary, instead of a stool; Mrs. Thompson on the high seat by the desk, with Mary perched upon the desk itself; Uncle Thomas on the skull of a rhinoceros, which he dragged out from its corner, to the front of the stove; and Emily stretched on the rug, looking up in his face as she leaned her head upon her hand. As for poor Mr. Thompson, there was no seat left for him, so he laid down on the table, and made a pillow of Blackstone's Commentaries and Faraday's Chemical Manipulations. As soon as they were all comfortably settled in their places, and felt themselves quite at home, the following conversation took place.

Emily.—"Now, Uncle Thomas, we've got you all to ourselves. Tell us where you have been, and what you have seen, and what you have been doing, ever since you left us, last January."

Uncle Thomas.—"I am afraid it would take us almost too long to answer you in full, just now, so, you

will probably have to wait until I write a book of travels, before you can hear the whole story. But I have no objection to give you a hasty sketch of the journey; and if we are unable to finish it to-night, we can renew the subject when we meet again, you know."

"Well, do begin then, that's a good uncle!" said Stella, and Mary, and Emily, all in a breath:—and Uncle Thomas began.

"I travelled by the usual route to New Orleans, and took passage in a small schooner for Chagres, on the 28th of last January. Our vessel would have carried conveniently, about ten people besides the crew, but we had no less than forty on board, with all their baggage; so we were crowded and miserable enough, as you may well suppose. We had to cross the whole length of the Gulf of Mexico, to get to our proper port; and, as the Gulf is large enough to be called a sea, and is often as rough as the great ocean itself, everybody except the sailors were very sea-sick, for several days."

Mary.—"What kind of sickness is sea-sickness? Do people ever die with it?"

Uncle Thomas.—"No, my dear; so far from it, that they usually enjoy better health after it is over, than they ever did before. Do you remember how very sick you became when I was swinging you for the first time, at the *Calisthenium* in New York?"

Stella.—"Oh yes, that I do! I thought I should never swing again as long as I lived; but I have got used to it now, and like to swing very much."

Miss Wilson.—"And do you remember, Stella, when cousin Charlie Roberts came home so pale and faint, last spring, after the tobacconist had persuaded him to smoke a cigar, and how he went to bed and laid there for two whole days, and we were fearful he would have died?"

Stella.—"To be sure I do! But Charlie says he can smoke cigars like a man, now; because he is used to it."

Uncle Thomas.—"The greater the pity! When little boys begin to smoke or chew very early, they are generally stunted in their growth, and very seldom come to be full-grown, fine-looking young men; and their minds become so weakened, that they almost always fall into bad habits, that shorten their

lives and destroy their characters. I know of but three animals that eat tobacco."

Emily.—"And what animals are they, Uncle Thomas?"

Uncle Thomas.—"The goat, the sheep, (sometimes, but not often,) and a nasty, ugly muck-worm, that lives upon it when it is green and growing."

Emily.—"But if it be so hurtful to little boys, why should big men use it? Father chews and smokes!"

Uncle Thomas.—"Go, ask your father, child; and see if even he does not look a little *sheepish.* But I must go on with my travels.

"In ten days we arrived at Chagres, and set foot for the first time within the ancient empire of Montezuma, where once the Indian race built splendid cities, and lived in the midst of luxury and refinement, equalling, if it did not exceed, that of their Spanish conquerors when Spain was the most magnificent of European nations. Alas! those Indians, though they are no longer slaves in name, as they were in the days when Mexico was made a *civilized* monarchy, are even now, for the most part, in a more oppressed condition than the negroes in our own

Southern States; being tempted or driven into debt, by their creole neighbours, and then held in bondage until their debts are paid; which their employers take good care shall never happen, if deception and bad treatment can prevent it."

Mary.—"I don't exactly know what a creole is, Mr. Wilson; is it a coloured man?"

Uncle Thomas.—"Not exactly, my dear, but let me beg you to call me uncle, like the rest of the children. You must not be formal with me. A creole is a person born in America or the West Indies, whose parentage, on one side at least, is of the Spanish or French race. A creole may have some negro blood in his veins without losing the title, or he may be still more deeply mixed with the Indian. In some South American countries, when people of too much colour to rank usually with the creoles obtain importance, by means of their wealth or public services, whether in peace or war, laws have been sometimes passed, ordering that they and their families, should be *considered white.*"

Stella.—"Ha! ha!—As if a law could change the colour of the skin! I wish you would get a law

passed, to make my hair as beautifully light and wavy as dear little Emma's!"

Uncle Thomas.—"I dare say, my child, you will find many to think yours quite as beautiful, if not as light; so we will not trouble the legislature on the subject. But, to continue my narrative; instead of a magnificent Mexican city, we found Chagres a mere collection of mud huts and miserable cottages,—the inhabitants almost all Indians; for there was but one proper creole in the place, and he was the magistrate, or, as the Spanish call it, the *Alcade.* The houses were mostly without floors, and as dirty as carelessness and poverty could make them. The country around was a low, swampy, very sickly sea-coast, and the place was crowded with all kinds of strangers,—Dutch, French, English, Spanish,—New York dandies in kid gloves, Yankee pedlers whittling their sticks, Philadelphia mechanics, Western woodsmen with their axes on their shoulders, Tennessee riflemen and southern planters, all talking of gold, gold, nothing but gold, in half the languages of Europe at once, and all singing or trying to sing

'I'm off for Californy,
With my shovel on my knee!'

Some of them were dying almost every day of the coast fever, principally because they would drink rum and eat all kinds of fruit to which they had been unaccustomed. On the very day of our arrival I attended the funeral of a poor old man of nearly seventy years, who had sold his farm in Indiana, and started out with his wife, to seek his fortune in the land of gold and gems. Poor fellow! I had seen him in Cincinnati, a few months before leaving, and had endeavoured to persuade him to remain at home; but he said he was hale and strong, and was determined to go where he was sure to grow rich in five years; 'then,' said he, 'I will return and live happily with my *boys*,' (they were stout farmers of thirty and forty years of age), 'who will be thought somebody in the world, when I enable them to outshine their proud neighbours.'"

Mrs. Thompson.—"And do you mean, my dear sir, that a man of seventy was foolish enough to leave a comfortable home, and brave all the hardships of a

new country, and the labour of digging for gold, for the mere sake of more!"

Uncle Thomas.—"Madam, it is even so. There seems to be no madness too great for those who are smitten with the love of wealth. Even his gray-haired wife was his companion in this desperate undertaking, and I called upon her to offer my services, and inquire if she had the means to return in safety to her home and friends. 'What!' said she; 'do you suppose that I would return, after coming so far, and go to labour for a living again, at my age,—a poor lone woman? Ah! if poor John had only lived through that terrible fever! But they tell me that you can wash out sixteen dollars a day at the diggings, with nothing but a big cullender and a wash-basin. The sand is full of gold for a hundred and fifty miles.' I saw the case was hopeless, and I left the old lady, in order to look after my own affairs."

Emily.—"But, Uncle, if all that she said was true, why should she not go where she could make so much money so easily?"

Uncle Thomas.—"Let me ask you, my dear children, what is the use of money?"

Emily.—"Why, to buy a nice house to live in, and fine clothes, and plenty to eat."

Stella.—"And to buy a coach to ride in, and to give parties and balls."

Mary.—"And to buy pretty books, and to pay people for ploughing and harrowing, and to give something to poor little boys and girls that have nobody to take care of them."

Uncle Thomas.—"Well done, Mary! you have the best notion of the use of money; but suppose that the people who plough and harrow could get more money out of the furrows than they could carry, and the little boys and girls could pick lumps of gold out of the rocks;—then suppose that everybody was so busy gathering money that there was not houses enough within two thousand miles, to hold one in ten of the diggers, and no such thing as a coach in the country;—then suppose that nobody would spare time to plant corn,—no, not for ten dollars a day,—because they could dig fifty out of the ground;—and suppose there was not clothes enough in all the land to cover

a quarter part of those who had worn out their old ones in digging. Then, again, suppose that the rainy season was coming, when nobody could work out of doors, and that nobody had anything laid up to eat, during three long rainy months. Then suppose,—and suppose—Let me see! Suppose the poor old widow got to California with three hundred dollars, and then found that it would not keep her six months in town; —that it would take four hundred to carry her to the mines, where the gold is found, and that, after she got there by begging and starving she could not buy a cullender and a wash-basin for less than a hundred more! What would money be good for then?"

The children stared with their eyes wide open in astonishment, and at last Emily cried out, "But, Uncle Thomas, I thought gold would buy everything anywhere. Surely, there is no such country as you are talking about."

"Nevertheless, children, such was very much the condition of California when I visited the mines," replied the traveller.

"And how did *you* manage to get what you wanted? How came it you did not starve?" asked Stella.

"Oh, ho!" said Uncle Thomas, with a laugh. I can live anywhere in the woods, because I am a botanist, and can find food that few people know anything about. I have lived on lizards, snakes, and frogs, or on barks and wild roots before now;—besides; I carried a bottle of quinine and a box of seidlitz powders always in my pocket, and when the poor sick miners found I would not take even fifty dollars in gold for a dose that cost me two or three cents in Philadelphia, they would do anything they could for me, and would give me anything they could possibly spare for a little medicine and a little of the knowledge that tells how to use it; so you see that knowledge is sometimes worth more than money:—but bless me!" he added, "what a racket there is below stairs! The party is breaking up, and you must run to help the little girls to find their muffs and bonnets. I shall be engaged to-morrow, but perhaps the next day, or the day after, I may tell you more about California; so good-bye." And he shook hands with all the young folks, till he came to Emma, as she lay on Miss Wilson's lap, then, as he stooped to kiss the little cherub, he exclaimed,—"Angels protect the child! she is sound asleep!"

THE PUPPET SHOW.

On the evening of Christmas day, the young folks of the family were all collected in Mrs. Thompson's parlour, with Mrs. Thompson herself, and Miss Wilson, who had agreed to remain with her friends and their new *protégées*, Mary and Emma, until her own mansion could be put in proper order.

The two little strangers now felt perfectly at home, and, as I know you will be interested in everything they said and did, I will give you the conversation just as it occurred.

Emma.—"Miss Wilson, will Uncle Thomas be here this evening?"

Miss Wilson.—"No, my dear; I met him as I came from church this morning, and he told me that he should be engaged with Mr. Thompson, for two days, in unpacking and examining some minerals and plants, that he sent home from California, by way of Cape Horn."

Stella.—"Oh dear, how dull we shall be!"

Miss Wilson (laughing).—"That is certainly a great compliment to Mrs. Thompson and myself! However, my brother has not been unmindful of you, for he has left one of his portfolios of engravings for you to look at, and I have lots of little stories for children to read, when you are tired of the pictures. Shall I bring them down?"

"Oh do!" cried all the children.

Miss Wilson went to her room, but immediately returned with the portfolio and two or three pretty little books, published in London, almost as neat as the Christmas Blossoms.

The girls sat down at the centre table, and began to examine the pictures; but they had hardly commenced, when Mary caught up one of the prettiest plates, and exclaimed, "Oh Aunty! just look at these pretty boys! Who are they? What is that queer thing, that one of them carries about his neck? And that barefooted fellow—what a queer cap he has on, with a long tail to it!" and the children all gathered round the speaker to hear what Miss Wilson would say.

Miss Wilson.—"They are poor Italian boys, my dear; and that little urchin is what they call a *fantoccini* boy. *Fantoccini*, in Italian, means a puppet, and this box that hangs round his shoulder is a puppet show. He makes his living, by showing sights to other little folks, as poor or poorer than himself. See how eagerly he eats that piece of cake. Poor fellow, no doubt he is often very hungry, for there is nobody to take care of the *fantoccini* boy."

Mary.—"But why don't his father and mother take care of him?"

Mrs. Thompson.—"There are a great many little boys and girls in the world, who have no mother or father, my child."

Miss Wilson.—"And the *fantoccini* boy is generally no better off, even when he *has* parents. In many parts of Italy, the people are so oppressed and poor, that they have no means of supporting half their children; and many of them are turned out of doors to seek their fortunes, by themselves, when they are not more than seven or eight years of age. You may see them scattered all over Europe, some carrying puppet shows, and some, little hand-organs, which they play

along the streets of every town and village, in happier countries, receiving, now and then, a few of the smallest copper coins, by which they must live and keep their instruments in order: and terribly hard work it is, for the half-starved little creatures. Most of them carry monkeys on the tops of their boxes, to amuse the crowd while they play and sing; and the monkey is often the only friend the poor Savoyard can boast on earth."

Stella.—"But you called them *fantoccini* boys, at first, Aunt;—what is a Savoyard?"

Miss Wilson.—"As I told you, my dear, these boys do not all carry puppets: a much larger number live by the hand-organ, the pandean pipes and well-trained monkeys; and this class are seen continually, in our own streets. I hear one, even now, grinding his discordant noises, just round the corner. They are commonly called Savoyards, because, by far the greater part of those who wander over Europe, are born in Savoy—an Italian country bordering on Switzerland and France. Those that remain in Italy, get along pretty comfortably; for the climate is mild, and the people are fond of all sorts of sights and

shows: so, the poor boys can generally make enough to buy some maccaroni, their favourite food, and then they are content to lay down to eat it in the broad sunshine by the side of a hedge, looking, for all the world like so many Indian jugglers swallowing snakes head foremost. When night comes, if they have no home, they can creep under the hedge, and peep up at the stars shining through the leaves, till they fall asleep. But in more northern and colder countries, these children suffer cruelly in the winter. Everywhere, the magistrates and constables persecute them; and when their necessity drives them to theft, they are often whipped and turned out of town, instead of being shut up in *nice comfortable prisons*, as they would be in this country. Every hard winter many of these unfortunates perish in the fields and woods, for want of food and fire."

Mary.—"Oh! Aunty! how cruel!"

Emma looked up into Miss Wilson's face, and her great big eyes grew bigger and bigger, and her under lip pouted out, till, at last, she ran and plunged her face in Mrs. Thompson's lap, and burst out crying.

Stella.—"Why, Emma!—I am surprised that you

should cry so, because these naughty little thieves are punished for their laziness and wickedness. Mr. Thompson says that people that can work, and won't work, should be made to work! They need not starve, if they would go out into the country and raise corn and potatoes."

Miss Wilson.—"Come here, Stella, my love! You were a little orphan before you were a year old. Now suppose I had been a naughty, lazy aunt to you, and had never taught you to read or to sew; and suppose I had sent you out to beg, and if, when you came home at night, without as much money as I thought you ought to collect every day, because the people would not give you any, I was to abuse you and falsely charge you with spending the money for cakes, and whip you with a great leather strap, that would bruise you black and blue wherever it struck you, and send you to bed without any supper, though you had nothing to eat all day. Then, suppose I found you not as profitable as some other little girl or boy, that would steal enough to escape a beating every day, and enough more to keep fat without bothering me; and suppose I had turned you out of doors, as a

nasty, good-for-nothing, *honest* little wretch, that was such a fool as not to steal without being told to steal; so as to bring its poor lone aunt into the scrape, if it should be caught in the act. But because you were my niece, suppose, I took pity on you, and found you a little companion of your own age, who had learnt to steal, but too clumsily for me; and suppose I gave you a hurdy-gurdy and a monkey, telling *him* to *play* for a living, and *you* to *sing* for a living—how then? Suppose that you had wandered out—a couple of desolate Savoyards—into some rich German town; and in the dead of winter you stopped at the kitchen door of the fat burgomaster's residence, to ask leave to lodge in the stable, because there was a terrible snow-storm blowing, and instead of you being fed and put to bed in the hay-mow, the constable was sent to take you, and leave you outside of the gates of the town, on the open common—"

Stella (*crying*).—"Oh, Aunty, stop! I can't bear to hear any more!"

Miss Wilson.—"Have patience, my child. Those who find fault with others ought to take the trouble to examine all the circumstances; and I have not

quite done yet. Now, suppose that the fat burgomaster, with his well-fed and well-dressed boy—of your own age also—should be crossing the common for the sake of a walk under the clear, bright, cold winter sky, and to see the beautiful snow-flowers, and many-coloured icicles hanging like long thorns of crystal on every branch and twig of the shrubs and trees; and suppose their attention should be attracted by a poor little shivering monkey, sitting by the side of two little mounds of snow, and working as if he were turning a grindstone, while a strange, dull, tinkling sound came struggling up from under the white blanket covering all the earth, and seemed to play, out of time and tune, and all by fits and starts, the touching little air of 'Home, Sweet Home!' And then suppose that the burgomaster's boy, tripping along to see what the monkey was doing, should stumble over the other mound, and uncover the beautiful faces of a ragged little boy and girl, looking right up at the burgomaster, with countenances so sad and suffering, yet so uncomplainingly, in the stiffness of death—what do you think the burgomaster would say?"

All the children were, by this time, sobbing in concert; and Emily said, "I should think he would never sleep in peace again as long as he lived."

"You are quite wrong, my child," replied Miss Wilson; "when he returned to dinner he would probably tell his *frau*, as the Germans call their wives, of this singularly providential punishment of two of the little Savoyard thieves, that were constantly robbing the hen-roosts of the farmers, and pilfering from the sober and good citizens in town; no doubt he inquired, why do not the little rascals go to work and raise corn and potatoes? Ha, Stella! that is the right way to serve the little thieves, is it not?"

Stella.—"I will never speak ill of a poor little organ-grinder again! indeed I will not."

Emily.—"But surely people cannot be so very wicked anywhere in the world! can they?"

Miss Wilson.—"Wicked, my dear! why the burgomaster is, no doubt, a devout churchman, and really believes in his heart that the wickedness is all on the side of the poor little Savoyards. Though a magistrate and a judge, he has no time to look into the causes of what society is pleased to call crime, and

how should he know any better. But, joking apart, such occurrences are by no means uncommon in Europe. If half the money expended by lawyers and justices in punishing crime were expended in finding out the root of the evil, this world would soon be far happier than it is."

Emily.—"How happy we are in living in a country where everybody who chooses to work can find plenty to do and plenty to eat. I suppose father did not think of other countries, when he said what he did to Stella."

Miss Wilson.—"Did you ever read the evidence given before the Mayor of Philadelphia last spring, when the newsboys were taken up for selling penny newspapers on Sunday? I was in Europe then, and it made my heart sick to see how much alike was the condition of the Savoyards and *fantoccini* boys around me, and the poor of our own great cities. Every country on the face of the earth seems to produce too many people to live comfortably, even when half the ground is still uncultivated."

Stella.—"Aunty; why do they not punish the naughty parents who turn their children out of

doors? It is not the fault of the little ones if the old ones whip them till they steal, or turn them out of doors for being honest."

Miss Wilson.—"You must ask some one wiser than I to answer that question, my dear: that there is something wrong in the present state of society is plain enough, but the men who are, and ought to be, as the Bible teaches us, the heads of society, will tell you that these things are beyond the understanding of women and children."

Mrs. Thompson.—"I am very much afraid, Stella, that Mr. Thompson did not think long before he spoke, when he said those who would not work ought to be made to work. To me it appears that the public ought to teach them how to work, and where to find work, before they shut them up in prisons or turn them out to starve, because they were not born with silver spoons in their mouths."

Miss Wilson.—"There is one thing, however, that we all know, my children,—Providence looks alike on the just and the unjust; and if Man, who is most responsible for the government of things on earth, should make mistakes of judgment, or be guilty of

cruelty upon his fellows here below, God, who sees all, will make all even in another and a better world. If you are careful not to think hardly or to act hardly towards those who have not been blessed with kind and indulgent parents and guardians, because they do what it would be very wicked for you to do, who have been taught better; you may safely leave all questions of guilt in others till you are older and wiser. At last; it matters little what happiness or misery we may suffer here, in carrying out the great purposes of the Creator; for, in an eternity of happiness or misery, these trifles will be forgotten."

Miss Wilson sat a few minutes in deep silence, upon which no one seemed inclined to intrude. Then, turning her eyes from the ceiling, where they had been resting during the short interval of thought, she added, with a smile :—

"But I do not wish to redden your eyes with tears on this happy anniversary; so, as I have given you the history of the most unfortunate fate that can befall the Savoyard of the continent, suppose we step over the Channel, and hear the story of a poor little fellow stolen from his parents in England. It is written by

an English lady who loves children very much, and knows how to talk with them; but, as some of her remarks would hardly be understood in America, and a few of her expressions are rather beyond your capacities at present, I have altered her language in a few passages, and have crossed out one or two others with pencil-marks. Say, shall I read you the story of the Orange Boy, by Mrs. Hofland? He was a chimney sweep for a while. They employ little white boys for sweeps in England, and they fare about as well in that country, as the Savoyards do in Germany and France."

The children dried their eyes immediately, and cried out with one accord, "Oh, do, dear Aunt! Read it now,—right away!"

So she told them to draw up their chairs in a semicircle round the sofa; and she read them the following tale.

THE ORANGE BOY.

BY MRS. HOFLAND.

"ONLY to think of my being so busy to-day with the chimney-sweepers, and the family arrived last night at the Hall, and, most like, some of them will be coming in, for I know the two little gentlemen are stirring."

These words were uttered in lamentation by Sally Simpson, the wife of Mr. Talbot's bailiff (or collector of rents and agent), to a neighbour, as they stood together in the farm yard, and were quickly followed by the addition,—"But 'tis no matter, seeing they have all got safe home, and his honour has already gone into the justice-room, and my lady is doing good for somebody, one's quite sure."

Her words were cut short by the arrival of two handsome boys, of about eight and six years of age,

the sons of the master she had justly been praising, and whom the good woman, notwithstanding her bustle, was delighted to see. Before she had time to offer congratulation and welcome, the wretched and half-naked child who had just finished sweeping her chimney, rushed forward and said, addressing the elder, though he trembled as he spoke, "Is your father *really* a good man?"

Both the boys answered eagerly, "that papa was a *very* good man."

"And is he a justice of the peace?"

"Oh, yes, and a member for the county."

"Well, then, please to take me to him, that he may be good to me—my master has used me ill ever since he bought me."

"Bought you?" cried all his auditors.

"Yes; he gave two golden sovereigns for me to the man who took me from my own mother."

These words awoke compassion in all, but the loud voice of the master, who had now disposed of his soot and was prepared to leave the place, startled them, and the boy's entreaty was repeated in the very agony of terror. Sally felt confident "that no

bad lad would dare appeal to his honour," and the two Talbots, touched with sincere pity for a poor creature about their own age, and naturally courageous, stood by him so closely that the brutal master could not seize his victim to inflict the punishment threatened for delay. Whilst the parties were thus situated Mr. Talbot himself appeared, and the confusion of many voices subsided.

The extremes of human existence might be said to meet, as the miserable little sweep, tremblingly yet confidingly, stepped forward and looked up to the tall, handsome, and all-powerful gentleman whose situation and appearance so strongly contrasted with his own, and who encouraged him to speak by the look of compassion his very employment excited. The boy soon ventured to say, "Please sir, master beats me and starves me cruelly."

The question "How came you by this boy?" drew forth the account the boy had already given: "he had been bought from on board a collier, and he was an idle young dog, who was growing saucy on his hands."

"Not saucy, but I can't help growing," said the child; "little master here can't help it, I dare say."

The young Talbots were very tall for their respective ages, and the words were spoken in a tone of so much sorrow as to touch the hearts of all. Proofs of ill usage were, indeed, soon displayed on his poor lean person, of a nature to justify Mr. Talbot in immediately depriving his master of a slave so illegally obtained; but when the man complained of his great loss, and that he had a large family to maintain, there was hesitation in Mr. Talbot's manner.

"Ask Jem, sir, if I ain't a wife and five childers—he always speaks truth."

"Yes, he has five," said the boy; "that's why I be kept so thin, that I may get up the flues; for they be all bigger than me."

Mr. Talbot paid the man for sweeping the chimneys, but reproved his cruelty sternly, and ordered him to go, and be thankful that he had escaped punishment. The man did as he was bid; and Mr. Talbot, shocked by the signs of want and suffering presented by the poor little sweep, endeavoured to conceal his feelings by saying, in a gay voice to his boys, "Well! now I have done as you wished, what will you do with this Flibbertigibbet, I wonder?"

"My clothes will fit him, I am sure," said Frank.

"And my cap will do for him, and mamma will give him shirts the same as the schoolboys," said his brother.

"And I," said Sally, "will give him a good washing and something to eat."

"You must do more, Sally; keep him with you, and make him a steady, good little boy, till we see what he is fit for," said his kind benefactor, whose sons had already ran off to secure the means of clothing the destitute boy.

Dame Simpson's share in this labour of love not only awoke her sincere compassion and good will, but her imagination also. The man from whom he had been liberated admitted that he had been stolen, and she concluded that it must have been from some very superior home: in order to try if he could quicken his recollection by the sight of a spacious house and costly furniture, he was taken into that of his patron, and shown various articles found only in the houses of the great; but, with equal truth and simplicity, he declared, "that he had never seen anything like it before, except when he swept chimneys at Castle

Howard." No! all he could remember was, that he had a very good mother, who was dressed in black and had a baby in her arms; that there was a maid called Nelly, and a garden with currants in it; and that he had a soft bed, and was called little Jemmy.

Even these recollections seemed well-nigh obliterated; less, perhaps, by time than hardship; for many a sad story had he to tell of his later days; but good food, cleanliness, and kindness made him soon forget his sorrows also; he became the gayest and most grateful of earthly beings, and exhibited a thousand tricks and accomplishments to please his "young masters," so that his name of Flibbertigibbet was confirmed to him. He could climb trees like a squirrel, play tunes on nicker-nackers, make whistles and willow bird-cages, crow like a cock, whistle like a linnet; and, when sent to the school provided by Mr. Talbot for his own dependants in the neighbouring village, he learnt to read with such rapidity that the master was convinced he had formerly been instructed; and he said himself, "I think that must be the case, for the letters seem somehow like old acquaintance to my eyes."

Nor was this the only proof of early instruction he gave; for, when taught to say his prayers and taken to church, he behaved with the propriety of one accustomed to go thither. He continued to speak truth upon all occasions, and, notwithstanding the gaiety of his spirits and his love of laughing and making others laugh, he never failed to perform most punctually the light labours committed to his care. Indeed, he loved the animals around him, both for their own sakes and those to whom they belonged; and he was so desirous of proving his thankfulness that, if permitted, he would have swept the chimney of his Honour, much as he detested and even dreaded the employment.

When little Flitter (as Sally called him) had been thus happily situated something more than a year, his young patrons were removed to Eton (a boarding school of the highest class, in England), where children are prepared for college. This afflicted him very much at the time; and even after his sorrow was past, he ceased to find pleasure in play, or to practise his former tricks and drollery. At every moment he could spare, he was poring over a book and a map of England lent to him by his kind schoolmaster, who

said, "it would show him where he now lived and the places he must have travelled through when he came."

The Simpsons thought it "mighty proper that young gentlemen should learn everything, but as to poor people troubling their heads with maps as well as books, that would never do;" so in order to divert him from this pursuit, and also to reward him for his attention to the poultry and the calves, they took him as a great treat to the summer fair at York, first showing him the Minster (a kind of Catholic church or monastery) and other places most remarkable in that ancient and interesting city. On going to the busy part of the town, Sally and her young charge were attracted by an exhibition, where a theatrical performance was about to take place, and in the mean time a young lad, very gaudily dressed, was jumping and tumbling on the platform. Here William Simpson left them, having some business, but promised to return; and here, for a time, they were very glad to stay, like the crowd around them, all of whom seemed delighted with the young performer,

into whose cap abundance of half-pence and not a few sixpences were thrown.

As the tumbling went on, Sally had repeatedly heard Flitter say to himself, "I can do that," and when she saw him step forward and address the master of the show, and afterwards step behind the curtain, she was afraid he was himself going to play over his tricks; so far from that, he returned soon and said he "would go home directly, as he had many things to do;" and although she told him a neighbour "would see to everything," he persisted in returning, for which she was sorry, as she saw that his eyes were full of tears, and he twice returned to shake her hand and say "goodbye."

What was her surprise—her sorrow—nor less that of her husband, when they found that the poor fellow had not only performed all his duties, and left everything in the nicest order, but was gone, no one knew whither. On looking into his little garret, they found his slate, on which was written, "Dear friends, I am going to seek my mother."

This assertion they did not exactly believe, for they had found that the acting man at the fair was leaving

York that very night, and were convinced that Flitter's movements were someway connected with his—not conceiving it possible that his love for his mother, whom he could not remember, was strong enough to tempt him away from so comfortable a home as they had provided him.

These honest people were not aware of the fact that, in proportion as the boy's health and strength had returned, his memory had been, to a certain degree, restored, though still very insufficiently for any positive purpose. He had been long brooding on the possibility of retracing his former home, when his power of obtaining money for the purpose suddenly burst upon him at York, from the success of a boy like himself as to age, and inferior in skill. All his conclusions, as arising from his recollections and his knowledge of the country, rushed upon his mind and quickened his resolutions. He felt sure that his mother must live in some town or village near the river Humber, from whence he had been enticed or forced on board a vessel to be made a cabin-boy, and that he had been treated very badly because he was unable to do all that was required. It ran in his head

that his last master had once said he was told by the former master, at the time he bought him, that little Jem had had a fever on board which would keep down his growth for years.

Naturally a most affectionate child, and every day perceiving, either from the children he mixed with at school, or from his young masters, the happiness of having parents and relations, his heart yearned towards the distant mother and the little babe he still fondly remembered; and from the time when he lost sight of those he so dearly loved, his thoughts had been constantly employed in laying plans for finding them once more, especially after he was induced to conclude that his mother was a widow, and could not fail to be rendered wretched by losing him. His first effort to free himself from tyranny had been successful —how did he know but that an attempt to discover his natural relations might be equally so?

Alas! poor Flibbertigibbet soon found that he had exchanged a life of ease for one of labour, for which applause by no means repaid him, and the money for which alone he had forfeited his happiness, was denied; the contents of his cap, though exceeding

that of the other boy, was seized by the owner of the show, and a scanty supper and straw bed was the reward of his exertion.

It is true he was told "that by and by he was to have a benefit," and that "the grown gentlemen lived on their benefits;" he had therefore nothing left for it but to be patient. Besides, he was so profitable that a sharp look-out was kept upon him, both by the manager and the other boy, so that he was for some time little more than a prisoner, and he could not hear of any second good justice to deliver him from this thraldom; so he went on tumbling, and hoping for better times, sometimes rewarded by food or pence, sometimes neglected and derided. When, at length, he found that part of his bundle had been stolen, and that the other boy was in many respects a bad associate, he determined to leave the company so soon as he could obtain a mere trifle, and postponing his scheme of seeking home, to throw himself again on the pity of his late friends. "But never, never," said he, sobbing, "will I do one thing that shall make me afraid to look his Honour in the face."

With this good resolution, the poor boy continued

uninjured in mind, though often sorely tempted, alike by his wants and his companions, who reproached him and ridiculed him. Unluckily they continued to go from one inland town to another; so that he remained as far as ever from the object of his pursuit: and, although, when they reached Sheffield, a benefit was given to him, and, it proved to be the best he had ever witnessed, yet after the deductions of the master were made, only eighteen shillings and nine pence were given to *him*.

This was, however, a large sum, and several of the company sought to ease him of it, by laying wagers or playing at various games; but James was much too wise to be thus drawn in. Having sauntered round the town early, he had seen upon the canal, a vessel bound to Howden, and he knew that from thence he could easily get into Lincolnshire: therefore he silently took his now reduced bundle, repaired to the quay, (a quay is a wharf or landing-place, on the bank of a river or the sea,) and, mingling with a body of graziers on board, happily escaped all observation. His persecutors supposed him to be so happy at pre-

sent in his acquisition that he would not think of leaving the troop.

To Hull the anxious wanderer dared not go, lest his old master should spy him and reclaim him; nor did he like to meet the observation of any person engaged with shipping, as he knew no hold could be so strong as that of a vessel, nor any tyranny so hopeless as that practised by its master: he therefore prepared to walk through the country as soon as he landed, and thought himself very happy in having an opportunity of purchasing a stock of oranges at Howden. because, by the sale of them, he would not only be able to maintain himself, but have a plausible reason for going into the back part of houses and gardens;—for. he fancied he should recognise his mother's garden, as he used to have a part of it for his own.

Having got with his oranges a wallet, his clothes at one end and at the other his oranges, he set out. but not without casting a look of sorrow towards the Selby road, for that led towards the park where his benefactor lived. Having, however, accomplished so much, he hoped that more would be in his power; he rallied his spirits and tried to be manly.

When the poor boy reached Barton, remembering it only too well as the place where he had stopped with the sweep some time, he hastened to get thence into the villages which lie on the banks of the river, which he felt to be the acquaintance of his whole life. Having done so, he felt his spirits sink, from the loneliness of his situation, and the sense of fear, and indeed shame, which at times would steal upon him. He had much pleasure, however, at times, in the kindness of the people; for, in Lincolnshire, they are singularly hospitable to strangers in every rank of life. Many a slice of bread and basin of milk were freely given him, and often was he permitted to share the bed of a lad like himself, as he passed through the country.

Indeed, his appearance was so respectable,—his face and hands being always clean, and his clothing, with the exception of his shoes, still so decent,—that he conveyed no other idea to the honest people who thus received him, but that of pity for one so young, who was cast on his own resources: and so well did he dispose of his merchandise, that he was frequently obliged to apply for a renewal of his stock to the

larger towns. From this circumstance he made slow progress, and saw with dismay the days shortening, and felt the cold blasts of autumn blow cheerlessly over the long flat country.

After wandering thus for many weeks, and reaching as high as Spalding, he determined to retrace his steps; as the impression was still more strong than ever upon his mind that he was in the right direction, the dialect appeared so familiar to his ears. (In England, people in different counties speak the language so differently that, often, they can hardly understand each other.) On re-entering the town of Grimsby, weary and foot-sore, he determined, as evening was drawing on, to seek his former lodging, and not attempt selling his fruit till the following morning.

He was just about to replace an orange in his wallet, when a sweet voice called out to him, and the face of a beautiful little girl was seen to peep over the half-door of a very poor cottage, who said, "Please to give little Sally that pretty thing!"

The boy looked wistfully at the fair round face and curly head, and thought he had never seen anything

so pretty in all his travels; and weary as he had felt but just before, he thought he could have gazed for an hour upon it. No person came near the door; but the child earnestly reiterated her request, and James, stepping up to her, gave her the orange: in doing so, he perceived she was better dressed than might have been expected, but it was her beauty and confidence that had won him, together with her name of Sally—"for surely that was one he ought to love."

"Yes!" said he to himself, "Sally is a sweet name to me; and now my face is set towards that Sally who was always good to me, I will return to her, for I am undoubtedly wandering here in vain."

Full of this resolution, in the morning he counted his oranges, considered the possibility of paying for a passage to Snaith or Selby, and made himself as respectable as he could in appearance, before he sallied forth to sell, as he now hoped, his last cargo. Scarcely had he set forward, when a voice behind him cried out, "That's the good boy! that's him, mother!"

Our orange boy naturally turned his head, for it was the voice of his little friend of last night; she

had hold of the hand of a lady, who quickened her steps to get up to him.

"I believe, my good boy, you gave (not *sold*) my little girl an orange last night; I must buy her a few more, and pay for that also."

"Not *that*," said the boy, blushing, as he offered her some of the finest.

The lady was not difficult to please: whilst choosing her oranges, it struck her that giving the boy a breakfast would be her best way of rewarding his civility; and, having paid him, she asked him to return to her house; "It is but a step from hence," she observed.

James carried the oranges after her; and on entering, she went forward with him into her kitchen, which was at the back of her parlour; on getting thither, the boy looked through the window, and instantly shrunk back, exclaiming, "Oh, dear! how strange I feel!"

The lady, seeing him turn very pale, asked him if he were well, to which he answered so sensibly, as if to account for his indisposition, that she inquired how old he was.

"I wish I knew, madam, but indeed I do not."

"You are a fatherless child, I fear?"

"I think I am, but God only knows! I was stolen from my mother, which is all I know of myself."

"Stolen!" cried the lady; "stolen! when? where? Speak, child! do you know your name?"

"Oh, no! I wish I did! I only know I was called 'little Jemmy!'"

The lady could not speak—she was on the point of fainting; and the maid, coming to her assistance, said, "Tell missis all you know, my boy, but be sure you tell truth."

"I have nothing to tell besides, except that we had a maid Nelly, and there was a little baby, and a garden very like this of yours."

The girl shouted aloud, "O, it's all right! it was my sister Nelly that is married; little Miss was at her house last night when you seed her,—but missis will faint away,—what shall I do? what shall I do?"

Her mistress did not faint; she burst into tears—she sank upon her knees—she tried to utter thanks to

God—she held out her arms to her son—she called him "her darling, her comfort, her long-lost James."

Had he then indeed found his mother? were his wishes fulfilled, his hopes realized? Alas! the poor boy could not believe it:—far different and inferior as her situation was to the only lady he had ever known, yet she was surely too grand to be his mother,—the mother of a sweep, of a boy that tumbled at fairs—that hawked oranges through the country!

But Nelly now entered—gazed at him, and declared she should know him among a thousand;—besides, was he not the picture of his sister, and the very model of his own father's picture?" As she spoke, the honest woman's voice, manner, nay, her prominent teeth, were all familiar to him, and rushing to his mother's arms, he cried, "Oh, yes! I see it all; I am your son!—I have not wandered so long for nothing."

But who can tell how much explanation was given—what caresses were lavished? Who describe the emotions of a fond mother's heart, who for four long years had numbered her son with the dead?

We need not say that when Flibbertigibbet again

made his appearance at the E—— Park, which was the day of Mr. Talbot's return thither, he was accompanied by his grateful mother, who felt as if she could have been eloquent in thanks, though she only proved so in tears. It was a question whether old Sally Simpson or young Sally Harrison, his sister, was the happier person; or whether little James or his young patrons were the merrier. Enough to say, that our wanderer has still a kind and approving patron in the gentleman who rescued him from want, cruelty, and an early grave.

WESTALL. SARTAIN.

THE DEAD BIRD.

On Wednesday evening, the little folks were again collected in the parlour; tumbling over the portfolio of Uncle Thomas in fine style; that is—all of them except Emma, who had dressed Dash in red, white, and blue ribands, and built him in behind a pile of chairs in one corner, where she made him hold Mrs. Thompson's carpet hammer in his mouth, and addressed him as Grand Worthy Patriarch, which office her father had once filled, among the Sons of Temperance in another state. As for Mrs. Thompson herself, she had gone to see a sick relative, leaving Miss Wilson to amuse the children as best she might.

"Aunty," said Stella, "here are a parcel of pictures, with leaves of paper pasted to their backs, like little books; and the paper is all written over with poetry. Is Uncle Thomas a poet?"

"He writes rhymes for the young ones, sometimes, as Emily knows; for, he wrote several pieces for her in former years," replied Miss Wilson. "But I fear," she added, "that my good brother's doggerel verses, have very little claim to the title of poetry, though they are generally very useful for the morals they contain. Bring them here, my dear, and let me look at them."

No sooner was the word *doggerel* pronounced, than Dash forgot his honours and his dignity. Leaping over the barrier of chairs, and scattering the many-coloured ribands on all sides, he rushed up to the speaker, and thrusting his snout almost into her face, looked in her eyes with an inquiring glance, that seemed to say, "Did you speak to me, ma'am?"

The children laughed heartily, and gathered around Miss Wilson, who after examining the *poetry*, selected a few pieces from the bundle and remarked:

"These will serve to amuse us of evenings, when Uncle Thomas cannot be with us. Here is a little mock ballad, about a poor child sorrowing over a dead bird. It seems to be written for the very young,

and may interest Emma; so, if you have no objections, I will read it."

Emma jumped up into her lap, and looked her thanks—and Miss Wilson at once began.

THE BALLAD OF LITTLE DICK.

"How sweetly sings yon little bird,"
Said Mary Jane one day,
"The prettiest song was ever heard,
It sings upon the spray.

"Poor little bird! I'm sure 'tis hard
To live out when it storms,
And have to hop about the yard,
And pick up crumbs and worms.

"*I'm* fed, and clothed, and put to bed,
But in his nest at night,
Upon hard sticks, *he* rests his head—
I do not think it's right!

"Ma nurses *me*—*I'll* nurse the bird,
Oh, what a pet he'll be!

I'll give him milk—I'll give him curd,
And share with him my tea;

"And then, how happy I shall feel,
As he his 'thank-ye' sings—
No more obliged to make a meal,
Upon such dirty things."

To get a cage, away she flew;
And Tom, he laid a snare,
And soon the bird—alas! 'tis true—
Was held a prisoner there.

He did not seem to mind it much,
But snapped and caught the flies!—
That "Dick" at this vile game would clutch,
Was wondrous in her eyes.

Her mother often said, she knew,
Better than Mary Jane,
What little girls should eat and do;
So, 'twas not very vain,

In her, to think she knew as well,
What would best suit her pet;

And out she went, the cook to tell
Her noonday lunch to get.

Hot porridge, in an earthen pot,
Her hunger to assuage,
The good cook gave:—away she ran
And thrust it in the cage.

"Now eat it, Dicky, dear," she said;—
How kind and sweet she looked!—
"Learn to be nice and clean, like me,
And eat your victuals cooked!"

But Dick was frightened at the steam,
In spite of all her care;
He tipped a wink, and gave a scream,
And clung against a bar.

"Poor thing! he does not know what's good:
He must be taught," said she;
"He ought to be content with food
That serves so well for me."

And so, she drew the pot, and caught
The bird in t'other hand,

And told him that he must be taught,
To eat at her command.

Into the porridge, hot and nice,
She thrust his little bill—
Dick dropped his wings, and rolled his eyes,
Kicked, gasped, and then lay still.

"How nice he goes to sleep," said she,
And looked at him with pride;
But soon she saw that could not be,—
His eyes were open wide!

"What ails the bird?—Up! little Dick!"—
It would not stir a limb—
She feared she'd played a naughty trick—
Her eyes were getting dim.

Upon his back she laid him down,
To wipe his little head—
The feathers left the scalded crown;
For little Dick was dead!

And now the poor child sighs and droops,
And owns with tearful eyes,
That girls were made to live on soups,
And birds, on worms and flies!

When the reading of the ballad was concluded, little Emma expressed her extreme sorrow for the poor little bird; but Emily remarked:—

"How foolish you are to suppose that any child would be so silly as to put the head of a dear little bird into a basin of hot soup, to make it eat! Uncle Thomas was only joking when he wrote that nonsense. I heard him say one day, that he knew a lady once, who was riding in her coach in some far-off place, away out in the woods, where she saw a very pretty little curly-headed, blue-eyed girl, all dressed in rags, sitting in the road and making mud pies in the ruts; and she took a fancy to the child, and got its mother's leave to bring it to town, and bring it up for her own. And she sent the little girl to learn music and mathematics, and dancing and Dutch, and geography and Spanish, and philosophy and French, and astronomy and cooking, and all the other accomplishments. And she took her to balls and the theatre, and the Mercantile Institute lectures, and all the other sights. And she let her have cakes and candies, and let her go to pic-nics every May-day to get the country air. And she was the very kindest lady that ever was seen.

"And now, just because the little girl happened to get weak in the chest, so as to have to wear Minerva braces; and because, after about two years, she caught the consumption and died, Uncle Thomas let out so about her—you wouldn't believe how he took on! He said it was little better than murder,—that it was just as bad as undertaking to bring up a robin on hot soup;—just as if giving little boys and girls what they like, and what they can live upon, was anything like forcing little birds to eat what they don't like, and what will kill them.—So never mind the verses, Emma dear, Uncle Thomas is only in joke."

"Not altogether in joke, I suspect," said Miss Wilson; "for we may sometimes kill a pet as effectually by too much of what seems to be their proper food or their proper enjoyment, as by that which is more obviously hurtful; and to explain my meaning, I will read you a story about birds told by an English lady, who evidently tells the truth, though she does not choose to give us her name."

And Miss Wilson then read the following tale about humming birds.

THE HUMMING-BIRD.

BY C. E.

Ellen Spencer was a little girl of nearly nine years old, who had lately arrived in Trinidad, from St. Vincent's, with her papa and mamma. As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Spencer could make their arrangements, they removed from the hot town of Port of Spain, to a very pretty cottage about a mile distant. Ellen was delighted with their new residence; the trees, the flowers—in fact, everything was new to her; for, though born in the West Indies, she had always lived in town; and when her papa first drove her and her mamma out to "The Cottage," she ran about the garden, looking at everything, till the twilight, which is very soon over in the West Indies, warned her to return home.

"The Cottage" was a very pretty spot. It stood

on a little hill, which overlooked part of the ground, and a field of Guinea grass. Two beautiful trees, of the kind called purple-heart, hung their long, flowery branches over the garden gate. Near the house there were some fine orange and citron trees, along with coffee-bushes, one or two papaw trees, some pomegranates, and a few other fruits. A grape-vine had been planted, but never *trained*, at one end of the house, and had intertwined its tendrils with the water-lemon; a vine nearly resembling the passion-flower; while white and red jessamines clustered in wild profusion, round the rough posts which supported the verandah. One of the first things requiring the attention of Mr. Spencer was the garden, which, from its neglected condition, had become a retreat for hosts of chasseur ants, lizards, bats, and myriads of insects, not even excepting many different species of snakes.

There had been once, a small grass lawn and some flower-beds before the house; but the place having been uninhabited for some months, the grass was nearly as tall as Ellen, forming an excellent nursery for a little insect, called *bête rouge;* much more troublesome than the sand-tick, that raises such lumps

where it bites, in blackberry-time; while the flower-beds were in such a state of utter ruin, that they could scarcely be distinguished from the walks. Balsams, Lima beans, the African rose, and yams, were all thickly matted together, and formed such a luxuriant thicket, that it seemed wonderful how they had room to grow.

Ellen wished to begin to weed the garden, the very evening she came out; but her papa only smiled at her eagerness, and told her that perhaps he would see what could be done next day. She was sorry that her father was not so active a gardener as *she* intended to be; so, next morning she rose very early, and, having obtained her papa's leave, went out to the garden, determining to surprise her mamma by the quantity of ground she would weed before breakfast.

She set to work very heroically, with a nice light hoe of her own; but, alas! she soon found the deeply rooted weeds required a much stronger hoe and arm than hers, to dig them up. Before long, the Jack Spaniards (an insect very like a wasp, but which sting more severely), roused from their nests in the branches of the mango and papaw trees, began to

buzz and fly round Ellen a little closer than she exactly liked; then the ants came out stealthily, till they formed into a long, regular line, and poor Ellen was forced to quit *that* border.

All these troubles she supposed to be owing to her having begun to weed too near the mango and papaw trees; so, taking up her hoe and basket, she went to the opposite side of the garden. Here she found herself no better; for, once or twice, a stray scorpion, or centipede started out, and the merry green lizards, with their twinkling bright eyes, ran in such numbers about her, that she became quite afraid, and her hands trembled so much that she could not hold the hoe.

She then began to try and pull up the weeds with her hands; but this she was soon obliged to give up; the strong thorns of the mimosa hurt her hands, her wrists were stung by nettles, and her stockings were covered with the rough brown burr, which sticks to, and pricks every one who touches it. In a short time, the sun became so powerful, that Ellen was very glad to hear her father call her to breakfast. When she got indoors, she began to feel very un-

comfortable; her feet were full of *bête rouge;* her hands and wrists smarting with the prickles and stings; and, altogether, she felt so hot and tired, that she began to think gardening not quite so pleasant a thing as she had fancied.

As soon as she had done her breakfast, she sat down to work; but the *bête rouge*, from her morning expedition, irritated and pained her so much, that she was glad to get old Diana, the negro who had taken care of her from her birth, to come and wash her feet with sand and lime-juice,—a very painful remedy, though the only one for extracting the *bête rouge.*

Mr. and Mrs. Spencer said very little to Ellen on the occasion; they saw she had received a more practically useful lesson than any they could have given her, on the folly of being in such a hurry to do everything at once. As soon as the time of the negroes could be spared, Mr. Spencer employed them in clearing and cleaning the garden; and, in a few days, the trees were pruned, the walks swept, vegetables and flowers separated into distinct beds, the grape-vine neatly nailed up, and the water-lemon

and jessamines prettily trained round the posts and over the verandah.

Ellen, at last, confessed her father's slow, steady mode of gardening, answered infinitely better than her hasty one; and, for some time, this lesson kept her from being either so very hurried in what she did, or so obstinate in her own opinion; but, gradually, the recollection of this died away, till Ellen's old faults of obstinacy and impatience were as bad as ever.

One morning when Ellen was in the verandah, watering some plants her father had placed there, her attention was attracted by some very small birds of beautiful plumage, which kept fluttering about, now settling on the rich blossoms of the coffee tree, and then springing up with so rapid a flight, that her eye could scarcely follow them. For some time, she watched them very attentively, till she saw them fly to a papaw tree close to the house, and, at last, suspend themselves on the sprays of jessamine, which were twined on the posts of the verandah. Then she ran to her mother's room, and begged her to come and see the loveliest little birds in the world. So, her mother kindly put down her book, and followed

her to the verandah, where they found two of the birds perched on the branches of the red and white oleanders, which grew in small tubs near the door. But, as soon as Ellen and her mother approached, they flew away to the coffee bushes, where, after a few lively motions of jerking and bowing, they thrust their delicate long bills into the slender neck of the blossoms, to sip the limpid honey.

"Oh, mamma, what are they?" exclaimed Ellen, "do you know their names? did you ever see any of them before?"

"They are humming-birds, my dear," said her mother. "There are a great many of them in the West Indies."

"And where do they build their nests? and what do they make them of, mamma?"

"They generally build their nests on the horizontal branches of some low tree or on a twig of a bush. At other times they build them on some strong stalk, or even on garden weeds. The outside of the nest is made of fragments of the common bluish-gray lichen, a kind of scaly moss, which you may have seen on the trunks of old trees; and the pieces are glued

together, with the *saliva* or spittle of the bird, that, when it is once dry, turns the rain and keeps the nest free from moisture. On the inside there is a thick layer of a cottony substance, which appears to be made of the down of seeds, closely matted together; and the nest is then lined with soft silky materials, which are fibres of different plants."

"And how large are they, mamma?"

"They are of sizes proportioned to that of the bird. That of the ruby-throated humming-bird seldom exceeds an inch in diameter, and is about as much in depth; and the little inhabitant, when first hatched, is hardly larger than an humble-bee! Others are of a larger size; for the humming-birds are a large family, and differ both in size and colour, as well as in the form and material of their nests, in different countries."

"Where are the prettiest humming-birds found, mamma?" inquired the little girl.

"I cannot tell you from my own observation where the *prettiest* are to be found; but many kinds are found in Brazil, Mexico, and, indeed, throughout the greater part of the American continent."

"Did you ever see a humming-bird's egg, mamma?"

"Yes, I have seen many," answered Mrs. Spencer; "and the prettiest I ever saw was one of those of the ruby-throated humming-bird. The female lays only two eggs at a time; they are pure white, and almost oval. The patient little mother sits on these eggs ten days; at the end of which time the young are hatched, and in a week are ready to fly, though they are fed by the parent birds till they are a fortnight old. Considering that they are born naked, blind, and so weak as hardly to be able to stretch out their tiny bills to receive the food their kind parents bring them, this must appear to every one a rapid progress."

"And what do they like best to eat, mamma?" asked Ellen.

"From all I have been able to observe of their habits, and from what I have read of them, their only food appears to be the honey they sip from various flowers, and perhaps a few small insects that harbour in the bottom of the blossoms."

"Then, mamma, I think they might easily be kept

in cages, and fed with fresh flowers, or syrup every day. I will ask Cato, papa's servant, to catch some for me, and I will take *such* care of them, pretty creatures!"

"Gently, Ellen, my dear," replied Mrs. Spencer; "these poor little birds have baffled nearly every attempt to keep them successfully in cages: in one or two instances, they have all died, notwithstanding every kind care and attention. When in a state of confinement, they are usually fed on loaf sugar dissolved in water, which they prefer to honey and water. I read lately, in Audubon's 'American Ornithology,' an instance of these birds, when kept in confinement, being fed from artificial flowers made on purpose, in the interior of which sugar or honey and water was placed. But, even with this care they rarely lived many months, and were found as thin as if starved, when examined after their death. I have never heard of but one humming-bird that was kept alive long enough to be carried to England. 'A young gentleman, a few days before he sailed from Jamaica, for England, met with a female humming-bird sitting

on the nest and eggs, and, cutting off the twig, he brought altogether on board. The bird became sufficiently tame to suffer herself to be fed on honey and water during the passage, and hatched two young ones. The mother, however, did not long live; but the young were brought to England, and continued for some time in the possession of Lady Hammond; the little ones readily took honey from her lips, and, though the one soon died, the other survived for at least two months from the time of their arrival.' "

"Poor little things!" said Ellen; and then, pausing a moment, exclaimed, "Oh, mamma, do you see that one on the branch of yellow jessamine? what a splendid one! its throat is just like a collar of rubies; now they change to crimson and orange; and then those two feathers in the middle of its tail, so rich a yellow green! and now it is flying away; oh, mamma, *do* look at its wings, what a pretty purple brown they are! Of what species is that?"

"That is the ruby-throated humming-bird. certainly one of the prettiest I have ever seen; his little throat seems almost on fire, now he is in the sun."

"But, oh, mamma! *there* is another species I like

better; he is dressing his wings on that pink balsam opposite us," cried Emily.

"That is the ruby-crested humming-bird, which is said to be the most splendid of all," said Mrs. Spencer; "look how beautifully those rose-coloured feathers are arranged on the back of the head and throat! changing, according as the light falls on it, from a deep reddish-brown to a bright copper hue, and then to so brilliant a red as would almost dim a ruby's lustre. Then, see the clear golden green, and topaz yellow of the breast, its dark fan-like tail of a crimson brown, with the almost black band round the edge. The great naturalist, Buffon, called this elegant bird '*les cheveux de l'astre du jour*,' or *the tresses of the day-star;* its throat has been compared to 'the hue of roses steeped in liquid fire.' But, I think the name given it by the Indians is the most appropriate; when translated, it means *locks of the sun.*

"The Indians, mamma!" exclaimed Ellen; "did the savage Indians know anything about those delicate birds?"

"Yes, my dear, they did. Even the savage Indians

revelled in the admiration of their beauty, and used to deck their brides with the gem-like feathers plucked from the apparently jewelled and starry diadem, of those little birds. In the days of Montezuma, the ancient Mexicans formed magnificent mantles of their feathers; and the pictures Cortes admired so much were embroidered with their skins. In 'Mexico in 1827,' written by Mr. Ward, he mentions, that the kingdom of the Aztecs call the capital city Tzinzunzan, from the numbers of humming-birds in its neighbourhood, with which they decorated the statues of their gods. And the Indians of Patzquara are yet famed for this work. They compose figures of saints with feathers of the humming-bird, remarkable for the delicate workmanship and splendid colours."

"Why are they called *humming-birds*, mamma?"

"Because they make a loud humming noise with their wings as they flutter about; much louder, though not unlike that of the humble-bee."

"And do they sing at all, mamma?"

"No, my love, they only chirp like a little grass-

hopper, in passing from one flower to another, or when fighting."

"What! those feeble, small-looking creatures *fight?*" returned the little girl.

"Yes, my dear, and I have seen them fight very bravely too; when any other humming-bird dares to come to the same flower, or sometimes even the same bush, a battle ensues directly; and the diminutive warriors continue chirping, darting, jerking, and flying in rapid circles round each other, till the contest is ended, when the conqueror returns to the flower. When they are angry or terrified, they are very violent, and their flight inconceivably swift. They utter a shrill shriek when aloft; and often attack larger birds, by thrusting their long bill, which is as sharp as a needle, into their eyes. I remember once in Mariaqua Valley, in St. Vincent, a bee humming-bird darting out on me, when I passed near the stalk of wild fern on which its nest was built, chirping and flying round me, till, when it perceived I was not going to touch its nest, it returned back to it. All the islands of the West Indies, with the mainland of Southern America, have flocks of humming-birds.

I remember when your papa and I were first married, an officer of the —— regiment, then stationed in St. Vincent, and afterwards in Trinidad, who employed much of his leisure time in shooting humming-birds. When the regiment was ordered to England, he took the skins of the birds with him; and so many had he killed and caught, that the sale of them, in London, procured him money enough to purchase his company."

"Do all humming-birds make their nests of the same materials?" said Ellen.

"No, my dear; the *Doctor* Humming-bird, as it is termed, builds a nest of a lengthened shape, of dry grass, moss, and slender roots. It is suspended to the leaf of some plant of the reed species, and is cemented to it by glutinous threads of caterpillars and spiders. The entrance to the nest of the Doctor Humming-bird is low down, and it lays only *one* egg. The Black-humming-bird makes its nest of cotton, wove round the thorns and slender twigs of the citron tree; while the Topaz-crested Humming-bird forms a nest *seven-eighths of an inch* in diameter, the materials of which are cotton, with lichens plastered out-

side, attached firmly to some creeping plant by threads of fine cottony appearance, or slender tendrils and roots; while the lower part is covered with a thin coat of a glutinous substance. But all the humming-birds build their nests very delicately and neatly, yet with warmth, and very compactly. In this respect there is a general resemblance, however they may differ in the materials they use."

"They do not seem to be very shy, mamma; look, they are settling on that red oleander, and on the posts of the verandah, even though we are in it;" said Emily.

"Humming-birds," said Mrs. Spencer, "are not so timid as most other birds; they are not afraid of coming close to windows, or even into apartments, where there are flowers. I once saw the Least Humming-bird, as it is called, fly into my room in St. Vincent, and settle on a plant of red jessamine in the window. For many days it returned regularly, till the flowers faded."

"What is the colour of the Least Humming-bird, mamma?" inquired Ellen.

"A very glossy rich green," replied her mother.

"It is the smallest bird known; and it may give you some idea of its diminutive size, to tell you that, when dried, it weighs only about *thirty grains*. Its nest is made of cotton, and is about as large as a walnut; and the female lays two eggs nearly the size of *peas*. And I have lately read of one kind, of a bright green colour, found in America, which weighed immediately after it was killed, only the *tenth part* of an ounce avoirdupois, or about the weight of an English sixpence."

"Don't you think if I kept the cage in the verandah, and gave them plenty of flowers, I *might* keep some of the humming-birds? They would be very happy and comfortable, mamma."

"No, I do not think you could keep them, Ellen. I had a very clever friend, who was a naturalist, and I know he frequently tried to keep them in a cage, but without success; for they either became sickly and died, beating themselves against the wires of the cage, or drooped, and were so unhappy, that my friend released them. Besides, they could not be happy in confinement, after being accustomed to the free range of gardens and flowers."

"Perhaps so, mamma; yet I should *so* much like to have some."

"Very well, my dear," said her mother; "I do not forbid you to have them; perhaps a few lessons of the kind may prove to you that it is not wise in little girls to be so obstinate in their own opinions, in opposition to those who are older, and know better than they do—so take your own way."

Before that evening, Ellen had procured a cage of wild vines, made by Congo Jack, the son of the woman who superintended the poultry, and she had coaxed Delphine, a young French negro girl, to assist her next morning in catching some humming-birds.

Early the following morning, she rose with, or rather before the sun, and, accompanied by Delphine, went into the garden to lay wait for the pretty little flutterers. As soon as the sun had risen, the humming-birds began to flit out, one by one, among the jessamines, convolvuluses, and snowy coffee-blossoms. When Ellen saw one busy sipping the honey from a tall coffee-bush, she stretched out her hand to seize it, but off it flew to a bunch of blossoms,—Delphine

nearly caught it,—Ellen thought she had got it, and called to know if she had.

"*Pas tinèz*, ma'am," drawled out Delphine lazily, in her French negro *patois*, meaning she had not got it. And it was not until after many attempts that she secured one of the ruby-crested species, and soon after a white-collared one. Ellen was well satisfied with them, and putting them into the damp green cage, stuffed every interstice with flowers. She had scarcely completed her work, when her mamma and papa came into the *hall*, as the dining-room is called in the West Indies.

Neither of them took any notice of the cage and the birds; and Ellen, who felt she had done what they would disapprove of, did not, as usual, come running to show her prize to them. In the forenoon, she came to the room where her father and mother were writing.

"Papa, my humming-birds will not suck any honey from the flowers," she said, in rather an humble voice.

Her father looked up and replied, "They are gasping for breath,—you have put so many flowers

in the cage, and round it, that no air can get in; they are almost suffocated."

Ellen did not think this; so she put the cage back again into the verandah under a red oleander. Her mamma then called her to her lessons, which occupied her till dinner-time, so that she had no time to look at the poor sufferers till dinner was over. When she did so, she found all the flowers faded; and, bringing the cage into the hall to remove them, and replace them with fresh ones, she was startled by the appearance of the humming-birds. They were clinging to the perch—their once bright eyes closed—with no signs of life or motion.

"Oh, mamma! what is the matter with my birds? only look at them!" said Ellen.

"You have killed them, my dear, by putting them in that cold, damp cage, and shutting out almost all the fresh air," replied her mother.

Ellen looked aghast. She opened the cage and took them out; she held them in her warm hands to try and recover them: one just gave a faint chirp, and expired: the other rolled about in such agony

and convulsions, that her father ordered one of the servants to put it out of pain at once.

The servant did as he was desired; and, as soon as it was dead, brought it back and laid it beside his master on the table.

"These are your birds, my dear," said her father, as he handed them to her.

Ellen burst into tears. "Oh, mamma!" she sobbed, "I did not mean to do this—Oh, I wish you had told me they *must* die!"

"I could not tell you *that*, Emily; but remember how I warned you, and told you, that scarcely any one had ever been able to keep them."

"Are they *quite dead?*" said she, as she looked sorrowfully at them.

"Perfectly, my dear," replied her father.

Ellen began to cry afresh. "I did not mean to kill them, papa," she said.

"Perhaps not; but did you never consider that putting delicate little birds into a cold damp cage of wild vines, freshly stripped of their bark, and excluding the air, by filling every aperture with flowers, was a very likely way to kill them?"

"No, indeed, papa, I never thought of that; but I think it would have been better not to have had anything to do with them. It would have been *much better* if I had done as mamma told me."

"Exactly so; *now* you have come to the very conclusion I wished. Until you are much older, you will find it wisest to allow yourself to be guided by your mother and myself. We, though not free from mistakes in our judgment, are less likely to form wrong opinions, and more fitted, from our age, to know what is best, and most prudent for you. I am sorry the poor birds should have suffered, as they must have done; but this may be a good lesson for my little Ellen, not to indulge in her obstinate disposition. In childhood, you can do little harm to yourself, or others, by that fault; though it would be distressing to us, to see you grow up with so dangerous a foible. In *this* instance, it has cost two innocent, pretty little birds their lives. This morning, they were flying about the garden, in mirth and beauty; and now, what a sad contrast:—look at them! —stiff, cold, and dead! And, in permitting your obstinacy an unrestrained course, you must recollect,

when you are older, it might do great injury to yourself and every one connected with you. I hope, my dear, you understand me?" said her father.

"Oh yes, indeed, papa, I do; I am very sorry for what I have done. I will not *promise*, but I will *try* sincerely to check myself in all obstinacy. Will you forgive me, mamma?"

Her mother kissed, and forgave her; and as her father did the same, he said, "I know you wished to be kind to the poor little birds, and to feed them, and make them happier, by keeping them from fighting each other, and giving them everything they wanted, without even the trouble of seeking it. At sunset, we will bury the little birds, and plant an orange tree and red jessamine over them. Then, when the orange and jessamine trees blossom, and other humming-birds stop to sip the honey from them, I hope it will deter you from your old fault, by the recollection of the victims, which but for your obstinacy, in trying to be kind, when you did not know how to be so, might now have been as gay and as happy, as their fellows, fluttering from flower to flower, like 'glittering fragments of the rainbow.' If ever you are again inclined

to be obstinate, or self-willed, I will recall you to yourself, by leading you to the humming-birds' grave."

When Miss Wilson had finished this interesting story, Emily and Stella both confessed, that they might have been as foolish as poor Ellen, had they been placed in the same circumstances, and that they too, might have smothered a pet with flowers, though they would not have dipped a bird's bill into a bowl of hot soup.

"The death of the little country girl, that Uncle Thomas told you of," said Miss Wilson, "was produced much in the same manner. But it is bed-time now; so, kiss me, and away to your prayers!"

THE FOURTH NIGHT.

On Thursday evening, the family were collected after tea as usual, and nothing was wanting but the presence of Mr. Thompson and Uncle Thomas, to make the circle complete. But somehow, it happened that things did not promise quite so favourably for the harmony of the company, at first. Perhaps a cloud or two, on a summer day, improves rather than injures the beauty of the clear, blue sky; for all beauty appears the more agreeable by contrast, provided it be not too violent and startling.

You may possibly derive some comfort from a knowledge of this principle, when you grow older, my little readers. Suppose, for instance, that you should happen, at any time, to be pouty and irritable in company, when others around you are enjoying themselves, and behaving as amiable people always

do.—Now don't be angry with me, for supposing anything so much to your disadvantage; for, it is not to be expected that either young folks or old folks will be always in good humour, and if you are cross with me, you will do the very thing I have supposed you *might* happen to do sometimes, in more agreeable company!—Suppose, I say, you were to be a little ill-natured with your playmates or associates,—what then? Some people will say, that you would be very naughty and disagreeable indeed; but I will only say that you would be very kind and obliging; for, you have no idea, how much more kind and amiable others are made to appear by contrast, at your expense; and surely they ought to thank you, for setting them off to so much advantage. Great painters and poets, and people who perfectly understand giving fashionable parties, understand this principle and act upon it, whenever they want to produce a very fine effect. They call it, "the management of *light and shade.*"

The world is made up of pretty people and ugly people—people who talk too much, and people who talk too little—silly people and wise people, and a

great many people who are neither one thing nor the other—a kind of *ground-colour* or "neutral tint," for others to be drawn upon, so as to make them "stand out," and look life-like, and prevent them from being lost in the crowd.

If two or three clever folks are gathered in a company, or a picture, or a poem, and some one or more of them, have a little *shadow* about them, so as to melt them down naturally into the general ground-colour; then, if there be here and there a little deeper black for contrast, to set out "the high lights," you have everything requisite to make a fine work of art, and everything in "keeping." Try to understand this, my young readers; for, in a country like ours, you are almost certain to be called upon some day, to practise one or other branch of the fine arts, if it be only in giving parties or making stump-speeches, or delivering Fourth of July orations.

Well, as I was about to say; our friend Dash supplied the deep shade of our picture, at the commencement of this evening's amusement, though it was reflected for the moment, pretty strongly upon little Emma, and more slightly even upon Miss Wilson

herself, as we shall see, in the course of the following conversation.

"Run, Stella," said Miss Wilson, "and bring me the portfolio, perhaps we may find there some more poetry to interest you this evening."

Mrs. Thompson.—"Emily, dear, bring me my work-basket. While Miss Wilson amuses you, I will hem a few handkerchiefs for Mr. Thompson."

Emily stepped to the work-table in the back room, to execute this command, but Emma, also desirous of making herself useful, came tripping after, and begged to be permitted to carry it.

"Here it is," said she, as she re-entered, toddling along with unsteady steps, half hid behind a basket almost too wide for her little arms.

There must have been something ludicrous in her appearance, I presume; for, the moment Dash caught a glance at the walking bundle, he seemed to take it for a signal that some new sport was coming, and, springing from the hearth-rug with a short, quick bark, he leaped suddenly with his fore paws on to the child's shoulders, and his hind feet into the basket. His design was evidently to bound entirely over her

head, as he would have cleared a fence, but the barrier was not so firm as he had supposed; and away rolled the basket in one direction, over went Emma in the other, and the balls careering in all directions, and the handkerchiefs, scissors, thimbles, scattered over the floor, made 'a beautiful mess of confusion.'

"Are you hurt, my child?" inquired Mrs. Thompson, as she picked up little Emma.

"Oh, no! Dash loves me too well to hurt me," said the laughing girl, as she stooped to right the basket and gather the balls, in which task Dash was actually proceeding to assist her.

"Really," remarked Miss Wilson; "Sir Dash, for so lordly a puppy, betrays a very uncommendable rudeness of manners. By your leave, Mrs. Thompson, I will take the liberty to ring the bell and request Biddy to remove him to the more appropriate fellowship of the stable."

Just at that moment, her attention was arrested by the entrance of Stella with the portfolio; but Dash was by no means the dog to submit tamely to the severity of manner and tone betrayed by Miss Wil-

son; and it must be confessed that he forgot, for the moment, the courtesy due to a lady on all occasions. Dropping the ball he held in his mouth, he stepped in front of Miss Wilson, and gazing into her face, he deliberately rolled up the left side of his upper lip, until a long row of ivory fangs were plainly visible: then, giving a low growl, as much as to say, "Is this all the thanks I receive for doing the best I could to remedy an unfortunate accident?" he sprung through the door, and *retired in disgust* before Stella had time to close it.

"Well; I declare it does seem as if that singular dog actually understands our language. His manner would almost frighten a timid person, or a total stranger to his queer ways," said Miss Wilson: "but no matter," she added; "bring me the portfolio. Ah! here is a pretty picture of a little barefoot girl,—just such another as she of whom Uncle Thomas told you, that was caught running wild and making mud pies, but died when she was brought to town and made a lady's pet. What bright eyes the little creature has, —so like a young fawn! She is carrying a bowl of milk; and there is a darling pet kid walking close to

her side, and bleating for a share. Come, Emma, and hear what verses Uncle Thomas has written about this barefooted, bare-shouldered, bare-armed, and bare-headed mountain child."

"I don't mind listening to verses such as you read last night, Aunty, because I can understand them," said Emma, with a pout; "but I don't want to hear stories read with great big words in them, for I am only in three syllables. I'd rather play with the dog, and he has gone away angry, because you scolded him."

"Well, well; come and hear the verses. Uncle Thomas and Mr. Thompson will soon be here, and I shall feel easier with Dash when his master is present."

So Emma became somewhat pacified: she took her seat once more on Miss Wilson's lap, and the lady read the following ditty.

THE MOUNTAIN GIRL.

I am a little mountain girl,
They say we're very poor,
And every morn, Pa serves out milk,
In town, from door to door.

We do not get our milk from cows,
Like people in the vale;
Our cattle do not hook and roar,
Nor kick over the pail:

A great big cow would break her legs,
Among our rocks and stones,
But there our goats and kids can play,
And laugh at broken bones.

We do not plough, but grass enough,
Sweet fern and heather green,
To feed our flock in winter, grows
Our rugged rocks between.

And then, our milk is richer far,
And makes much better cheese,
Than what the great big cows can give,
The sick people to please.

They say, we're very poor indeed,
I s'pose it must be so;
Then what's the use of being rich?
That I should like to know!

The other day I went to town,
Riding in father's cart,

And mother gave me a clean frock,
  And dressed me nice and smart.

Thinks I, how they will envy me—
  The little boys and girls,
Down in the misty valley there—
  These wild flowers in my curls.

For Papa tells me that they have
  To hoe, and dig, and haul,—
They live so far off from the sun—
  To make things grow at all!

In town, I met a lady dressed
  In a cart-load of silk;
She looked so very pale and tired;
  I offered her some milk.

Says she, "Poor child!" and wanted me
  To take a pair of shoes;
I laughed, and said I did not wish
  To pinch my little toes.

I saw a girl, of my own age,
  Fretting her heart away;
Her ma refused her a gold watch,
  To tell the time of day.

I told her, in the mountains we
Could tell that by the sun;
She stared, and looked as proud as if
Some mischief I had done.

I asked a little boy to play,
But he looked saucy too;—
"My father owns that great high house—
Think I would play with you!"

"You might as well," I said, "for mine
Owns one ten times as high;
It stands on yonder mountain side,
Almost up to the sky!"

I dare say, we are very poor,
For so they all agree;
But we have everything we want,
And that's enough for me.

"Oh Aunty!" said Emma, when Miss Wilson had done reading; "I used to be so happy before I went to school, and before I went to the West; when mother used to let me run barefoot, down the long grass on the lawn, in Connecticut.—I wish I lived on

a mountain, and had a whole heap of little goats to play with! But there comes Uncle Thomas!"

The door-bell rang, and Dash gave another howl in the yard; and Uncle Thomas it was, sure enough, and Mr. Thompson with him. Dash gave a still louder howl, and scratched away at the side-door, as if he would tear it down.

"Run, Emily, and let in the dog, or we shall have no peace!" said Mrs. Thompson.

"Dash loves Uncle Thomas, as if he was his brother," replied Emily, as she went to execute the order.

"Fie, my child!" exclaimed her mother; "you should speak more thoughtfully and respectfully!"

"I have many friendships that I value less, because they are by no means as heartful," remarked Uncle Thomas, with a smile.

"And I should have no objection to his extending the same unquestionable affection to your sister," said Miss Wilson; "but I fear," she added, "that I must make interest with you, Mr. Thompson, as his master, to settle a feud between us. Sir Dash took offence at some rather censorious remarks upon his manners.

which I ventured to make, this evening, and he advertised me of his powers of self-defence, by uncovering a magnificent row of ivory ornaments, that was anything but prepossessing in appearance."

Mr. Thompson was on the point of inquiring, with some anxiety, into the history of an occurrence so unusual, when Dash himself made his appearance. He was evidently engaged in serious reflection, upon some important matter; for, instead of bounding into the room with his usual vivacity, he marched round the apartment with great gravity, looked up with an air of deprecation to Uncle Thomas, giving three wags of his tail, then stepped past his master, giving two wags of recognition, but, hanging his head, as if ashamed of something he had done; and lastly, advancing to Miss Wilson, laid his great head on her lap, and fixed his eyes steadily on hers.

"Poor Dash!" said she; "so, you are sorry for your want of gallantry in threatening a lady! Well, I was to blame, for under-estimating your intelligence and the delicacy of your feelings—so let us forgive and forget!"

She patted the dog on the head, kindly, and he re-

tired, apparently somewhat better satisfied. As he passed Emma, he made a mock spring, as if he were going to overturn her again, looking back cunningly, the while, at Miss Wilson, and then went to repose upon the rug. Except to prick up, first one ear and then the other, when the conversation turned specially upon dogs, he took no further part in the amusements of the evening.

THE FIREMAN'S DOG.

"It seems strange to me," said Mary Somers, after Miss Wilson had explained to her brother the resentful manner in which Dash had received her proposition to banish him to the stable; "it seems very strange to hear dear Aunty talking about a brute beast, just as if it were reasonable, like a man or a woman."

"You would not think so, Mary," remarked Emily, "if you had heard all the strange stories about dogs that Uncle Thomas and Cousin Peter told us last Christmas and New Year, and the year before. Dogs sometimes seem to be quite as reasonable as their masters."

"And will you not tell us some of those pretty stories over again?—Emma and I never heard any of them, you know," said Mary, leaning her elbows on

Uncle Thomas's knee, and looking up winningly in his face.

Uncle Thomas replied that it would hardly be right to waste the short bright hours of the Christmas holidays with twice-told tales, "nor is it necessary," he added; "for there is no end to the catalogue of interesting anecdotes that may be told of dogs. This very day I was painfully reminded of an old four-legged acquaintance of mine, for whom, when living, I entertained a high respect, by seeing a notice of his death and a short outline of his past life, in an old newspaper."

"Oh, do tell us all about him!" "Only to think of a dog having his life published in a newspaper!" "Is it true, Uncle Thomas, or did you make it all up out of your own head?" exclaimed the children in a breath.

"True, every word of it," he replied; "and I will tell the story as nearly as I can recollect it."

"Cassius, or, as he was commonly called, *Cash*, was a dog celebrated for his intelligence and faithfulness, not only in America, but even in Europe; for, many a foreigner, in visiting the various institutions

of Philadelphia, made it an object to study the fire establishment, which is considered the most prompt and effective in the world.

"Now, to visit the fire establishment of Philadelphia while Cash was living, and not to make his acquaintance, was scarcely possible. He was a Spanish poodle of the largest class, and of a beautiful gray colour; and, highly distinguished as that fine tribe of dogs has ever been, for dignity and intelligence, Cash was deservedly esteemed the most dignified and intellectual of the race.

"He was the property of a gentleman who resided in the neighbourhood of the Good Intent Hose-house, and attached himself to the duties of a fireman with so much regularity, and made himself so very useful, that he soon became to be regarded and treated as a member of the company. When a fire broke out at a distance, he would hear the alarm long before it could be heard by human ears, and then he would instantly fly to the door of the hose-house, and call the members to their duty by his well-known bark; thus securing to the company, for eight long years, the honour of being one of the most prompt, if not

quite the most active in the city. The moment the doors were opened he would seize the rope between his teeth, and lead off towards the fire, tugging with all his force to hasten the carriage on its way.

"When so many people were gathered to the rope, that in his doggish judgment his services were no longer necessary in pulling, he would let go and run on ahead, stopping and turning round occasionally to encourage the people to exertion by the most dogmatical of all barks, and when arrived at the fire, no one worked more industriously than he."

"Now, Uncle, you don't mean to say that Cash was really able to be of use at a fire!" exclaimed Stella.

"His services at a fire may not have been very important," continued Uncle Thomas; "but they at least displayed genuine *good intent*, and thus proved him worthy of his acknowledged membership in the company to which he had attached himself. We could hardly expect a dog to be as well acquainted with the principles of natural philosophy as a well-instructed man, and I must confess that Cassius was guilty of one very unreasonable error of judgment.

He certainly perceived that the water which passed through the hose was an important agent in extinguishing fires; for, he would follow its progress with the greatest anxiety, as it gradually distended the leather tube on its way to the place where it was wanted. He seemed to have a very imperfect notion of the distinction between living and inanimate things:—perhaps he even thought that the water was, like himself, *a member of the company;* for, he certainly held it accountable for all backwardness and carelessness in the performance of its duty. If it advanced too slowly, he would bark and snap at the hose where it crept along, in order to drive it faster; and when it ventured to spout out through any hole or leak in the tube, he would attack it most furiously, as though endeavouring to compel it to return to its proper business."

"Cash ought to have studied Coates's Physiology, as we do at school; for, that tells us all about "living things, and things that have not life," said Emily, laughing heartily at the idea.

Stella remarked that she had always thought that an eyestone came to life when it was put into a plate

of vinegar, and that rocks sometimes grew larger like plants, till she learned otherwise from that little book. "I have no doubt," said she, "that Cash would have been much wiser if he had paid more attention to such studies."

"Uncle, can dogs ever read books?" asked little Emma, with a very serious face.

"Now, how silly you are, to ask such a question," exclaimed her sister Mary.

"Well, I don't know," replied the child, with a puzzled look; "you remember yourself, that we both saw a learned dog in Cincinnati, that knew its letters!"

"My dear child," said Miss Wilson, "the learned dogs and learned pigs that are exhibited so often by showmen, are merely taught to fetch and carry, just as Dash will do, when one throws a stick for him to bring back, or when his master accidentally drops his glove or handkerchief in the street; see how he wags his tail, to show how pleased he is, to think that I hold him to be as learned as a learned pig!"

"But I do not understand, how being taught to fetch and carry, can teach them to know one letter

from another, and to spell out whole words," rejoined the little girl.

"I will explain," said Uncle Thomas. "The learned dog that you saw at Cincinnati, had a whole parcel of letters, each on a little card, spread out before him, and he was taught that, whenever his master ordered him to spell any word, he should go nosing about from one letter to another, until his master gave him some secret signal, which the dog had learned to recognise; and he was also taught that, whenever this signal was given, it was his duty to seize and bring to his master, the card that he happened to be nosing at the moment. Had you watched him closely, you would have seen that, while his nose was continually rummaging among the cards, *his eyes* were continually observing his master, and watching for the motion, that told him when he reached the right letter. So, you see that it was the master, and not the dog, that really spelled the words; and, although the author that Emily quotes seems very happily to have adapted the elements of science to the minds of very young children, I feel confident that either of his works, would prove rather too ab-

struse for the wisest pig or puppy in the land, *provided he runs upon four legs.* You must not suppose, however, that Cash was entirely ignorant of Natural Philosophy: he was a dog of observation, and understood very well, how much force was necessary to drag the hose carriage.

"On one occasion, a fire took place, when there were few persons disposed to 'man the ropes;' and three or four members, who were urging the carriage along, at a snail's pace, endeavoured in vain to persuade some of the chance passengers on the footway, to give them their aid. Cash did all he could, but, finding that his beloved company would probably be disgracefully late in coming into service, in spite of his exertions, he, at last, became furiously excited, and flying to the side pavement, forcibly seized upon the coat-tail of a gentleman, who happened to be passing, and actually pulled him to the rope. Nor was this all. The manner of the dog was such, that the gentleman, terribly frightened, found himself reduced to the necessity of serving the public against his inclination, or running the risk of a bite; so, he even helped to draw the hose all the way to the fire.

"There are some people called philosophers, who tell us that animals, though they can be taught a great variety of tricks, never learn to adapt means to an end, which is a purely reasoning process:—but there appears to be far more of pride than true philosophy in the doctrine that teaches that the lower animals are governed only by instinct, and are entirely deprived of reasoning power. At all events Cash, in this instance, undoubtedly did adapt the means to the end he had in view. He had never been taught to make prisoners to aid in pulling the rope, and even his own exertions were altogether voluntary. Had he not had a perfectly clear notion of the greater motive for haste in reaching a fire, than in returning from one, he would have been just as anxious to seize the rope in retiring, as in going; but, so far was this from being the case, that, on the return, Cash was always seen marching with great dignity, in front of the row of firemen, with the Director's trumpet in his mouth, conscious that his task of public duty had been fully and faithfully performed.

"While on this subject, I may as well give you

two other instances, in proof of his power of philosophizing.

"When the hose carriage was brought out to be washed, Cash was sure to be present, playing all manner of tricks. On one of these occasions, two of the members were endeavouring to turn the cylinder, in order to put on the hose, but they proved not enough for the task. This, Cash perceived, and immediately, without orders, ran to the residences of two other members, whence, by barking and other significant signs, he speedily brought them to the aid of their fellows.

"Not long before his death, several of the company took Cash with them on an excursion, upon the banks of the Delaware; and one of the members, seeing a ladder leaning against the roof of a two-story house, thought he would run up it, for a few minutes, to enjoy the view of the river. Cash, who had no idea that a fireman could be poetical or romantic, naturally concluded that business alone induced the act; he reached the roof at the same time with his master, and proceeded to examine the horizon with a critical eye, snuffing the air in various directions.

Finding, however, that there was no column of smoke in sight, or smell of fire upon the breeze, he left his biped companion to the enjoyment of the scenery, and quietly descended.

"But, though thus insensible to the charms of a magnificent landscape, Cash was unquestionably a wit, or, at least, a decided humorist. He had been taught to affect death, and would sometimes amuse himself by stretching himself out in front of the hose-house, without motion and apparently without breath, till a crowd of the neighbours and passengers would be gathered around the body. At these times you might kick him, or coax him, or drag him about as you pleased, yet he would give no sign of life, even when sharply hurt. As Cash was universally beloved, no little sympathy was sometimes wasted over his supposed remains, until some one of the members, hearing of the fate of the poor dog, would give a toll of the fire-bell, as if in honour of the dead, when, instantly, up would spring the dog, and making a feint of a furious assault upon the bystanders, would scatter the astonished crowd in all directions."

Here Miss Wilson expressed surprise that any-

thing could affect to be dead, so as to deceive observers.

"Difficult it certainly must be," replied her brother; "but by no means impossible. I remember, once, when in the city of Calcutta, entering my residence, one afternoon, and finding my servants in a dreadful state of anxiety. The native laws are very severe there, in cases of homicide, and it happened that a worthless fellow, who had obtained admittance through the gate, for the purpose of offering some trifle or other for sale,—I forget now what it was,—had behaved so impudently, that a sircar on duty struck him a smart blow with the palm of his hand. The scoundrel instantly fell and affected to be dead with such extreme art, that none of the domestics were able to provoke any evidence of life, though they well knew the trick and its purpose. The man wished to be removed while seemingly dead, in order to extort money.

"I was surrounded, on the instant of my appearance, by an agitated group, all begging me to bring him to life, meaning to make him discover the cheat; for no one believed him really hurt. I examined his

eyes—they were wide open and tearless in the bright light. The pupils were strongly contracted, and did not change when I closed an eye, and reopened it suddenly: the fellow had as complete control over them as the owl has! I held a looking-glass before his lips, but if there were any moisture escaping, it was evaporated immediately by the hot air. In some anxiety, I felt for his pulse. The muscles of the arm were rigid, as in spasm, and interfered designedly with my fingers. I felt for the pulse in the neck; and there, sure enough, it was beating away very calmly. I then amused myself by pinching him, and at last ran a pin half an inch deep into his leg without inducing him to change a muscle! The people were still more alarmed. Then, determining to bring the case to a conclusion, I told a servant to bring the earthen pan of coals, always kept burning on a table to light our cigars. 'What is Saheb going to do?' asked the head bearer. 'I have heard,' said I, 'that a live coal on the stomach sometimes brings even the dead to life.—I'll try!"

"And did he not speak then?" inquired Stella.

"Not exactly," said Uncle Thomas; "but I cer-

tainly did observe a slight change of expression in his face, which he, in vain, endeavoured to conceal. No one but myself, however, perceived it; and the anxiety of the crowd continually increased, until Hassan was seen slowly descending the stairs, with the pan of coals, and the little spring tongs. 'Blow them up bright, my good boy,' said I. This was more than the dead man could hear with patience. and seizing an opportunity when my face was turned away, he sprang to his feet, dashed through the circle, and darted up the street!"

The children laughed heartily at this little anecdote, and when their merriment was over, Emily wished to know, whether Cassius "lived to die of old age," or whether he lost his life at a fire, like a sentinel at his post.

"Alas!" said Uncle Thomas, "if it be truly glorious to die on the field of battle or of duty, poor Cash was denied that happiness; and yet, he probably owed his fate to the public estimate of his virtues. Greatness is sure to provoke hate and envy, and Cassius appears to have died by assassination. The symptoms attendant upon his last illness pretty plainly show that he

was poisoned by a rival member of some other fire-company, who could not endure to hear the universal praise of vigilance, which his quick ear and persuasive bark, secured to the 'Good Intent.'

"Cassius maintained his greatness even in the hour of death. It happened, that while he was writhing in agony, from the effects of the poison, but a moment before his end, the State-house bell tolled an alarm of fire. Instantly, he uttered a feeble cry, raised himself once more, with pain, upon his feet, and staggering towards the door of the apartment, fell dead upon the threshold! Poor Cash! He died, lamented by the whole neighbourhood, and wept over by the children; for, the childish heart leaps kindly back to kindness, and no biped was ever more kind and affectionate to the little folks, than the four-legged member of the Good Intent!"

"I hope they buried him and planted a tree over him, as the good lady did over the two dear little dead humming-birds, that Aunty Wilson was reading about last night," said Emma, wiping her eyes with the back of her hand, and smiling through a tear.

"He had a nobler monument than a tree, my

child," replied Uncle Thomas. "They stuffed his own beautiful curly-haired skin, and mounted him upon a pedestal; and now, every year when the great firemen's procession takes place, you may see him decked in wreaths of flowers, with a silver trumpet by his side, and drawn by elegant horses, riding on the front of the hose carriage that he so often led on to usefulness, while the people shout and applaud, when they see the life-like statue of the fireman's dog!"

Just as Uncle Thomas finished speaking, Dash gave a yawn, and rising from the hearth-rug, walked quietly to the door, as if anxious to leave the room.

"It is time for our little ones to go to bed now," said Mrs. Thompson; so they kissed all round, and away they went to dream of Uncle Thomas and Aunt Wilson, and of lots of stories, all very interesting, no doubt, but not to be remembered in the morning!

THE NOSE OUT OF JOINT.

"WELL, my children," said Aunty Wilson, on Friday evening; "this is the last night of our sociable meetings during these holidays. We must make the best of it, and then adjourn to next year. On Monday night you must get things ready for school, and your teacher has just written me that she intends inviting her old and new pupils to a general party on New Year's Eve, in order that they may become mutually acquainted, before they come together on Wednesday morning."

"Oh, won't we be happy!" said Stella. "But where is Uncle Thomas? Will he be here to-night?"

Miss Wilson informed the girls that her brother was obliged to leave town on business that afternoon, and had requested her to bid them good-by for him, till after the holidays. So she proposed that they

should rummage the portfolio for another pretty picture, to pass the time away."

"Here is a darling picture," cried Emma, "it shows a nice little boy looking ever so cross at the sweetest baby in the world, lying asleep in a cradle. What makes him look so cross? And what do they mean by putting under it, in great big letters, 'NOSE OUT OF JOINT?' I am sure I don't see but his nose is a very good-looking nose!"

Miss Wilson.—"Let us see what Uncle Thomas says to it; here is some writing pinned to the back of the picture. It is called 'A Story for the very Young,' and no doubt will just suit Emma. Shall I read it?"

All the children cried out "Oh, yes!" and she read as follows:—

"Harry was a good little boy, in common. His father was very rich and his mother very kind, and a fine life he had of it till he was four years old. When other children in our neighbourhood were cross or naughty, their friends would say 'Oh, how we do wish you were as good as little Harry Singleton!'

"Harry had a beautiful spaniel dog named Ponto, and he loved him very much, for the dog would play with him and follow about wherever he went, and would bring chips out of the water when Harry threw them into the mill-race, or into the pond—for the Singletons lived in the country in the summer time, and Harry's nurse often took him to walk along the creek and the dam, ever so far from the hall.

"Harry shared his cakes with Ponto, and taught him to eat molasses candy; and then he would laugh when it stuck in his teeth, making him rub his head about, and whine as if they ached.

"Everybody loved Ponto, almost as much as they loved Harry, but, even when his mother petted the dog on purpose to tease the boy, he was not jealous, as many very young children will be, when anything is more noticed than they are. So you see, that Harry was as good-natured as a little boy could well be. But there never yet was anybody who could always be in a good humour, and I must tell you how Harry was made jealous at last, and how I managed to cure him, when even his father and mother could not do so.

"One day, Harry's parents told him they were going to town, and that he must stay with his nurse in the country, till they came back, because the city was not healthy for children, in the hot weather, and it was then the middle of July.

"This was the first time in his life that Harry had been kept away from his parents for a whole day, and he cried and begged very hard that he might go with them; but his father told him it would not do, and his mother kissed him a great many times, and soothed him, though she cried a little herself. And she gave him a whole heap of span new playthings, and gave the nurse a thousand directions to be kind to him; so, when they got into the coach and drove away, though his bosom swelled as if it would burst, he did not cry as might have been expected, for he thought, poor fellow! that his mother could not stay a great while away from her own Harry!

"But although his father came out to see him every week, with gifts from his mother, it was long before he saw her again. 'Do let me go to see mamma,' he would often say, but his father's only answer was, 'Not yet, my child, not yet.' Then he

was continually asking of his nurse, 'When will ma come home?' But he could get nothing from her but a simple 'by-and-by.'

"At last, one day when his patience was almost worn out, his nurse came in from the kitchen, calling out 'Harry! Harry! come here, Harry!—here is a letter from your ma, that says you'll soon go to town, now, for you have got a little sister waiting to see you.'

"'I won't have any little sister,' said Harry, with a toss and a pout; 'I won't have any little sister! I am mamma's boy, and she shan't have anybody else!'

"'Ah, ha!' cried the nurse, '*your nose is out of joint;* but never mind, it will soon get right again.'

"'It isn't out of joint,' retorted Harry; but nursey looked very serious, and replied, 'boy's noses always must be out of joint, if they don't want to see their dear little sisters when they first come home.' So Harry looked at the glass and then at the nurse, again; and he felt his nose two or three times. At last he exclaimed, with considerable confidence, 'It isn't out of joint, at all!' and calling Ponto, he ran out into the garden to play.

"For several weeks Harry saw nothing more of his

papa, though the coachman brought regular messages from town, and nursey kept continually talking to him about his little sister.

"I have said that Harry was generally a good boy; but the more he heard about his little sister, the more his temper seemed to be soured, and his nurse had to tell him so often about his nose, that at last he thought there must be something the matter with it in good earnest; and he felt it until it was red, without being able to make it any straighter!

"You will judge then, that when, at length, orders came for the nurse to bring Harry to town, his pleasure in the idea of seeing his mother once more was not increased by the constant endeavours of his nurse to convince him what a dear, beautiful, darling baby sister was waiting to kiss him, at the end of the journey. She had taken so much pains to make him love the child in advance, that, young as he was, he fully made up his mind to hate it; for, he had a queer kind of consciousness that if it was half as good and pretty as nursey represented, his mamma would certainly love it better than a naughty little boy, who had been getting uglier and crosser continually, ever

since his nose had been out of joint. His ill-humour, however, did not keep the horses from trotting merrily along, and in three or four hours the coach stopped at his father's door in town.

"No sooner was Harry lifted from the carriage, than, followed by Ponto, he ran up the steps, and seizing the man-servant by the coat tail, exclaimed, —'Oh, Jacob! I am *so* glad to see you again! And where is mamma? and where is papa?'

"'They have gone out shopping, Master Harry, and will not be back for an hour,' said the negro.

"Master Harry was very much disappointed at first; but he soon recovered his spirits, and went romping through the parlours and the dining-room, and even the kitchen, with Ponto at his heels; overturning the chairs, rummaging the drawers, and peeping into the pantry and the closets, as spoiled children are apt to do, till everything about the apartments down stairs was reduced into beautiful confusion.

"Presently he thought that, since mamma was away, he might run up and see if mamma's room was all in order; and up stairs he flew, with Ponto wagging his tail, and cutting all manner of capers.

"In the entry above, he saw an old lady coming out of the door of his mother's chamber with a silver porringer in her hand. She looked very kind, yet Harry felt frightened at first, because he had never seen the old lady before. But, as she passed him, she patted him on the head, and said, 'Master Harry, I suppose; and as like his mother as one pea to another!' So she went down stairs, and Harry stepped in on tiptoe, with Ponto at his heels.

"Everything in the room looked pretty much as he left it, in the preceding spring. There was the bed, and the curtains, and the bureaus, and the big stuffed chair; and there too was his own beautiful carved swinging crib, in which he always slept by the side of his mother; yet, everything seemed uncommonly nice, and so completely in order, that he felt, without knowing why, as if he must not play and make a noise there. So, he picked up a large peacock's feather, that was lying on a stand, at one side of the room. He knew it had belonged to the great fly-brush, that used to hang in the dining-room; but, just as he was wondering who could have pulled it out, he thought he heard a noise, as if there were

something alive in the crib. He looked towards the crib; for he was not tall enough to look into it; and behold, there was a tiny, white hand, hanging over the white sheet! It was as fat as a dumpling, and he would have taken it for wax, if he had not felt quite sure that it was not there when he first looked at the crib.

"At first, Harry was very much frightened and dropped the peacock's feather; but he was a brave boy; so he walked right up to it! All of a sudden, it came into his head that it must belong to the little sister that had put his nose out of joint, and made even his nurse call him 'ugly' and 'naughty!' 'What business has it in my crib? That's my place, next to mother, and nobody else shall have it!' said he to himself; and he climbed up on the great stuffed chair, to get a better view of it.

"There it was, sure enough, sound asleep, just as you see it in the picture!—And there stood Harry, with his hands behind him, and his great big eyes staring at the little stranger, as if he would eat him up! His lips pouted and he wanted to cry, but could not. He seemed to know that the baby would now

lie, where he had always lain before; and where was he to sleep!—This was more than he could bear.—He could not move or speak—and even Ponto, who stood begging and whining, with his foot on the round of the chair, and the beautiful feather in his mouth, could not awaken his attention.

"Presently, curiosity led him to put out his hand and feel the little round arm; and scarcely had his finger touched it, when an evil spirit seemed to come over him, and he gave it a spiteful pinch!

"'What are you doing to the child?' cried the old lady, who re-entered the room, just as the infant gave a piteous scream; 'why, you little imp!' said she, 'you have pinched your sister's arm, black and blue! Begone from the room, this moment!'

"Never before had Harry received a harsh word. He rushed down stairs, and hid his face in a corner of the parlour, crying as if his heart would break; while Ponto stood behind him, with his head and ears drooping down, his tail curled between his legs, and his watery eyes turned dolefully upon his master, the picture of sympathy. Just then the door-bell rang, and his father and mother entered.

"On the afternoon of that unfortunate day, I happened to call upon my friends, the Singletons.

"'Where is Harry,' said I; 'he is generally the first one to welcome me!'

"'Alas!' said Mr. Sitgreaves, 'Harry is in disgrace.' And he told me the whole story, just as I have told it to you.

"'Will you not permit me to be a peace-maker here, my friends?' I inquired; 'I think I can read Harry an effectual lesson!'

"Mrs. Singleton replied, 'You are so happy in teaching children, Mr. Wilson, that I would be grateful for the attempt; for, I shudder to perceive such evidences of jealousy in a child so young.'

"Harry was, accordingly, brought in—his eyes red with weeping, but his countenance still displaying signs of unamiable obstinacy.

"'Come here, Harry! What is the matter?' said I, as he entered.

"'Why, Uncle Thomas, mamma has gone and put a little baby into my crib, and says she cannot love me any more.'

"'No, Harry, my dear,' replied his mother, 'I only

said I could not love you if you would not love your dear little sister, who is so pretty and so good.'

"'She is not pretty,—she is ugly,' cried Harry, with renewed tears; 'she is not good neither, or she would not take away my crib, and keep mamma from loving me.'

"'Ah, Harry! I see your nose is indeed out of joint,' said I, 'and when people's noses are twisted, they cannot see straight: that 's the reason why you think your little sister is neither pretty nor good. But I was a doctor in my young days, Harry; I can put your nose in place again, and then your mother will love you better than ever, and all will be right once more. Your mother says that if you do not love your sister she cannot love you; now tell me—you love your nurse who is so kind to you, and walks with you, and feeds you, and puts you to bed, and tucks you in so nicely every night, do you not?'

"'To be sure I do.'

"'And you love Ponto, who follows you, and plays with you, and begs, and fetches, and carries for you?'

"'Oh yes, indeed I do!'

"'Well now, suppose nurse should starve Ponto,

and kick him whenever he is in the way, and call him ugly and naughty, and suppose she should pinch him and make him howl, when he goes to lay down on your bed, as you taught him to do; would you love nurse, then, as well as you do now?'

"Harry hung his head and acknowledged he did not think he should.

"'And, suppose nurse should be even kinder than she now is to Ponto, and should pet him and nurse him and make a nice comfortable straw bed for him in your own room every night; would you not love nursey still better for loving Ponto so very much?'

"Harry said, 'May-be I would:—yes; I'm sure I would:—but what has that to do with the baby?'

"'Now, that question comes of having your nose out of joint. Just shut your eyes a moment and let me set it straight, and then you will see it all as clear as daylight.'

"Harry seemed frightened, but, on being assured that I would not hurt him, he did as he was bid, with the most serious face in the world; for, he really thought there could be no joke in the matter; and if there be any truth in animal magnetism, there might

have been some moral advantage in the good hard tweak I gave his little chubby nose on this important occasion.

"'Oh, don't!' said Harry.—'There! it's all right,' said I; 'now, Harry, can you not see that the baby is mamma's Ponto, and that she expects you to behave to it just as nursey does to the dog? You called it ugly and naughty, and pinched it because it had been put in your crib; and how can you expect her to love you when you will not love her Ponto? But suppose you were kind to it and carried it about and played with it;—then would not mamma love you better than ever she did before, because you were so good to her Ponto? And would not the baby love you, just as your Ponto loves nursey? And would not you all love one another the better, all round, because of there being so much more love among you to shine from one to another. You know, the more candles you put in a room, the brighter everything looks!'

"Harry looked up and his face brightened. Then he hid it in my lap, but he said nothing.

"'Mamma,' said I, 'let Betty bring in the baby,

and, my word for it, Master Harry will never pinch it again!'

"The bell was rung, and the child brought and placed on the mother's lap.

"'Now, Harry, go and see if it is not a pretty and sweet little sister.'

"Harry waited awhile; then he looked towards his mother with one eye—then with both eyes—then he raised himself up, but still held his head down and looked sheepish; then he walked slowly over towards the child, and stared into its great saucer eyes. At last, he put out his finger and touched its nose, to be sure that it, at least, was in the right place; and then the baby smiled, and all of a sudden Harry fell desperately in love with it, and took it in his arms, and toddled up and down the room with it, laughing as if he were wild.

"And then he brought the baby to his mother again, and his mother called him her own dear little Harry, and he felt so happy that he tumbled over and over on the carpet, and called to Ponto to come and play with him.

"But Ponto would not come. He lay moping and whining in one corner, and growled when Harry came near him.

"Harry stared at the dog in astonishment for some minutes. Then a sudden thought came into his head. He picked up the dog in his arms, and bringing him to me, he said, 'Ponto does not like to see me loving little sister—his nose is out of joint—do put it right, Uncle Thomas!'"

"Well, children," inquired Miss Wilson, when she finished the article; "what think you of Uncle Thomas's story?"

Little Emma kissed Aunty in testimony of her approval, but Emily remarked that though it might be very interesting for younger children, it seemed almost too foolish for Stella and herself.

"And yet," remarked the lady, "like everything that my brother writes, it contains a valuable moral, —nay, I may say two morals. In the first place, it shows the unreasonableness of expecting others to love us, when we are inattentive to their tastes, and indulge ourselves in expressions of dislike towards

any thing to which they are naturally attached. 'Love me, love my dog,' is an adage of no little meaning, and, 'love me, love my child,' is a feeling of all mothers. Again; the story shows us that affection, far from being weakened by having a multitude of objects to shine upon, is actually increased by the diffusion. Where there are many mirrors in an apartment, the room is much lighter than where there is but one, although there be but one sun to shine upon them all. These are lessons that the oldest may learn with advantage:—take them with you to school, my children; and remember that jealousy is a selfish passion, and in true love there can be no selfishness. I am sure that if you practise upon these precepts, you will be happy among your fellow-pupils, and your CHRISTMAS BLOSSOMS will bloom throughout the year.

THE END.